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ROBERT MAYNARD HUTCHINS, *EDITOR IN CHIEF*

AESCHYLUS

SOPHOCLES

EURIPIDES

ARISTOPHANES

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SOPHOCLES EURIPIDES

ARISTOPHANES



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GENERAL CONTENTS

THE PLAYS OF

AESCHYLUS

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Aeschylus c. 525–456 B.C.

Aeschylus the poet was born at Eleusis around the year 525 B.C. His father Euphorion, belonged to the "Eupatridae" or old nobility of Athens. Whether Aeschylus was actually initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries is not known. The accusation that he divulged the secrets of Demeter has been interpreted both as supporting and as refuting the view that he was an initiate.

Aeschylus fought against the Persian invader at Marathon in 490 and he may also have been with the Athenians seven years later at Salamis, and even at Artemisium and Plataea. Some scholars have found in the poet's knowledge of Thracian geography and customs an indication that he took part in one or more of the northern expeditions in the years following the Persian War.

The first of Aeschylus' plays was exhibited in 499, only thirty years after the establishment by Peisistratus of the annual contest in tragedy at the festival of the City Dionysia. Thespis, who won the prize at that competition, was called by the ancients the earliest tragic poet. But Aeschylus himself would seem to be the true founder of tragedy since according to Aristotle, he first introduced a second actor, diminished the importance of the chorus, and assigned the leading part to the dialogue.

Aeschylus' first recorded victory was in 484 when he had been competing for fifteen years. Between that date and the performance of his last work, the Oresteian trilogy and the satyr play *Proteus* in 458 he won the prize at least twelve times. He wrote more than ninety plays, of which seven survive. The oldest of these, the *Suppliant Maidens* cannot be much later than 490. The *Persians* which is the only extant Greek tragedy on an historical subject, was exhibited in 472, the *Seven against Thebes* in 467, the *Prometheus* probably not long before 458, the date of the trilogy made up of the *Agamemnon*, the *Choephoroe* and the *Eumenides*. The plays were exhibited in groups of four—three tragedies and a satyr play. Sometimes, as in the case of the surviving trilogy, but not always, the tragedies formed a dramatic cycle, interrelated in fable and in theme. The poet acted in his own plays.

According to Aristotle, Aeschylus was charged with impiety for revealing certain parts of the Eleusinian ritual, and defended himself by saying that he was not aware the matter was a secret. But the ancients knew neither the name of the offending play nor the precise nature of what was revealed. A later tradition adds to the fact of the accusation, the doubtful details that Aeschylus escaped the fury of the audience by clasping the altar of Dionysus in the theater and that he was later acquitted by the Court of the Areopagus because he had fought bravely at Marathon.

The first of Aeschylus' several trips to Sicily appears to have been made some time between 476 and 473. Like Pindar and Simonides he was invited to visit the court of King Hiero of Syracuse. After the eruption of Etna, Hiero had re-established the town of the same name at the base of the mountain. To celebrate the new city and to honor his patron, Aeschylus wrote and produced the *Women of Etna*. On a second visit to Sicily around 472 the poet is said to have repeated for Hiero the *Persians* which had just been crowned with the first prize at Athens. Sometime after 458 he was yet a third time in Sicily.

There is little reason to believe the various explanations offered in antiquity for Aeschylus' leaving Athens. Most of them are based upon his supposed envy of the popularity of Sophocles and Simonides, and are made improbable, if not impossible by known facts and dates. The fable that he met his death from an eagle letting fall a tortoise upon his bald head, presumably mistaking it for a stone upon which to break the animal's shell, may have had its origin in an attempt to interpret the allegorical representation of an apotheosis.

Aeschylus died and was buried at Gela in 456. The epitaph inscribed on his tomb is attributed by some to Aeschylus himself: *This memorial stone covers Aeschylus the Athenian, Euphorion's son, who died in wheat-bearing Gela. His famed valor the precinct of Marathon could tell and the long-haired Mede who knows it well.*

Shortly after the death of Aeschylus the Athenians passed a decree that his plays should be exhibited at public expense and that whoever desired to produce any of his plays should receive a chorus." His tomb became a place of pilgrimage and in the middle of the fourth century at the proposal of the orator Lycurgus, his statue was set up in the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens.

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THE SUPPLIANT MAIDENS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DAN US
PELASGUS *King of Argos*
AN EGYPTIAN HERALD
CHORUS O THE DANAIDES
ATTE DANTS

Argos A hill rises in the foreground, and on the sum mit of it stand a ars and stat es of m ny gods En ter the fifty ANAIDE with their slave girls a d D N US

Chorus

Zeus, the Suppliant s God be gracious to us,
Pitiful behold us, for fugiti es a e w
Wher th blown sand-dunes silt the mouths of
Nilus,
There w took the highway of the bl salt sea
There looked our la t at th land f Zeus, he borders
Lapsed and lost in the S rian ma, ches wild
Flee n t as outlaws banned for blood guilt
Lest peopl perish, but self-exiled.
Now a but this to escape abhorred embra es,
Marria e rites nholy that true love shuns
B tter fa lands and unfamiliar faces
Tha edded nd bedded w th King Ægyptus sons.
As when hard pressed on the board a cautious player
This piec or that from threatened squa with
dra s,
O mo seemed best unt Danaus our father
Counsel th f and lead r of our cause
One oe t suffe —and that th noblest sorrow
Seeing w ere ompassed in on e ery hand—
Tam in ot with the fleet o ocean billow
To fl nd our keel tou hed the Arg e trand
Whenc w boast oursel es sprun from the b eath
f Zeus nostrils,
And th touch f his procreant fin er laid
For d nasty founding on a king s da hter
E en th g at tormented heif maid
What land b t th would ffer us a ha en
Wher else th world o er should we w lcom find
Ha ing no rm but the suppliant s feeble weapons,
Bou h from th woodland plucked with white wool
twined?
Realm, broad realm brown land and spa kling
wat r
God of th sk and hol ones f earth
Denizens f da kness that ast men with
engeance
And in that Triad last named b t chief in worth,
Zeus th Protector f tra el weary pilgrims,
Keeper of th threshold never crossed by crime,
Send soft airs to greet our maiden meinie,
Winds of welcome blowing from a sweet calm clime.
But the ungodly sons of kin, Æ, yptus,
Bulls of the h rd, ere they trample this fair ground—
Loamy levels, tilth and fallow land and pa ture—
Far o er ocean with their swift ship hound!
There l t them meet with thunder blast and li ht
ning
Wrath of leaping seas and spite of storm swept rain
There l t destruction find them when rou h winter
Looses the lash of th loud hurricane
Ere they climb loth beds to make of us their minions,
Minions of their pleasu e and playthings of their
pride
So kindred blood shall not serve to cool brute pas
sion
Not by sweet exchan e of hearts sanctified.

You hin divine, I hail thee now
From beyond the sea thine id I in oke
Son flower fed of the Mother Cow
Qui k with Zeus b eat! nd h s handstroke.
So of the dam with hoof and horn
And enchanted body babe was born,
Ma child ma le fo mortal lot
Epaphus, th to ch be r

The naming f thee where lo g ago
Our Mother roamed thi pa toral earth
And the callin to mind of a anished woe
Shall bear witness in trials of later b rth
And more so row yet may e me into ken
Though we know not how and we guess not when,
Like ours f to-day and hers of old
And these at lon la t shall Time unf ld

T e that watcheth the wild birds winni o
Here t ease n his nati e bow e
The suppli t so f an alien race
Chance hea d shall seem as the sweet sad si ,gin,
Of T reus Daulian pa mour
The ni htingal hidden, the hawk in chase.

Sprin and summ r for sorrow she grieveth
Under th green lea es weeping her pain
And the life that was passed in homelessness

Spring and summer the story she weaveth
Of the child she bore by her own hand slain
And the wrath of a mother pitiless

I as the nightingale passioning for sorrow
To Ionian music tune my pipe
And these soft cheeks feel the rain worn furrow
That on Nilus bank grew round and ripe
For my heart hath learnt the meaning of tears
And I fill my lap with blossoms pale
Gathered with grief in the wood of wail
The better to hush these brooding fears
That are fain to know to what end I fare
From the land that lies dim in dust veiled air
If there be any who hearkens or hears

Nay but ye Gods of the bride bed and begetting
Hear me! Ye should be jealous for the Right!
Grudge lawless youth with the hot blood fretting
Lore that perfects passion s neophyte!
Set the brand of your scorn on lust that profanes
And mingle love s rite with austerities sweet!
What is fiercer than war? Yet for war weary feet
There standeth an altar no sacrilege stains
To what so wight would from battle carnage flee
A refuge awe owns and a court of deity
Where red handed Havo halts and refrains

Saith the wise saw of old
The purpose Zeus doth hold
Next to his heart no hunter brings to bay
All Being in his sight
Flows in the main of light
The mirrored glory of his perfect day
Where man the babbler with vain lips
Sees but the secular dark of unrelieved eclipse

The thing that he hath wrought
With brow nod of calm thought
Fallen stands fast and grappled is not thrown
His counsels tread the maze
Of labyrinthine ways
Through quicks through glooms with umbrage overgrown
And in that covert dark and shy
Bold riders check the rein foiled is the keenest cry

From towered bastions
Of Hope he plucks Time s sons
And tosses them to ruin If one brace
The mettle wearless
Of Gods for his duress
Pride pays with penal pangs though throned in the holy place

So let him mark afresh
How froward is this flesh
How the polled trunk for lust of me doth grow
With many a stubborn shoot
How pricks to mad pursuit
The unremitting goad a curse a cheat a woe

So to music impassioned
Sung high sung low
With tears I have fashioned
Untuneable woe.
Alack! tis like mourner s grieving
So sadly my quick spirit graces
With groanings of death griefs that live
And I cry unto Apia s high places
My broken speech to forgive
And falling down on my linen veil
I mar with rents its fabric frail
Tissue of Sidon s weaving

With amplest oblation
To high heaven we come
For hope s consummation
When death s wind is dumb
But alack! for the woes dark heaving
The billow whose path none traces
Nor what strand on its crest I shall reach!
I cry unto Apia s high places
To forgive my broken speech
And falling oft on my linen veil
I rend and mar its fabric frail
Tissue of Sidon s weaving

Thus far the oar right well hath sped
And the bark flax sewn to fend salt seas
With never a flaw in the following breeze
Nor winter storm to dread
Hath constant been as my prayers and vows
And I pray the Father that all doth s an
Here on firm earth that he may send
To well begun a happy end
So I that seed am of his spouse
August may flee the embrace of man
And live unlorded and unwed
Zeus daughter vowed to maidenhead
Look with a loving eye on me
That would keep chaste and pure as she
Whose virgin arm the arrow sped
And slew the Hunter in his lust
Whom Opis tremblingly outran!
O maid unwon a maiden grace
With all they power in this sore chase
That I the seed of Zeus spouse august
May flee the violence of man
And live unlorded and unwed

But if these will not then I will essay
The sun loathed courts of Death
Where never a sick soul is turned away
That wearies of this breath
And since Olympian Gods no help afford
My corpse shall access find to Zeus Earth s Lord
When suppliant boughs shall be decked with the knotted cord

Ah! Mother Io thee wroth Gods amerce
And of the courts celestial I know
That there dwell jealous wives who hate and curse
For waves run high when breezes stiffly blow

Then Right and Wrong shall be unreconciled
And Justice shall upbraid
Zeus, that honoured not the heifer's child
Whom once of old he made
If that at this late hour of time his eye
Be turnéd back when his own offspring cry
Yet, when we call, he hears—he hears though
throned on high

Ah! Mother Io, thee wroth God amerce
And of the courts celestial I know
That there dwell jealous wives who hate and curse!
For waves run high when breezes stiffly blow
During the preceding chorus DANAUS has climbed to the top of the hill

Danaus Children ye must be wise and
circumspect
Remember a wise judgment holp ye hither
Withheld for pilot safe and fatherly
Across unruly seas And here on land
I'll take thought for you and keep you safe,
If ye set down my words in your *heart's tables*.
Far off I can discern a cloud of dust
E the voiceless courier of hosts
Before the noise of wheel reach th the ear
When axles pipe unheard I can distinguish
An armed mass, with shields and tossing spears,
Horses and chariots of war curved
'Tis likely that the Princes of this land
Have heard of us from messengers and come
To be their own intelligencers. Whether
They mean no harm or sharp ese time t speeds
This terr array all things nc he ein
That you fair daughters, make this hill your seat
Dear is it to the gods of festival
P t me nd sport nd peac ful n lries.
Mor st that ca tle t e n altar stands,
A bu kle expugnably secu e
Then with all speed ascend and with you take
I solem ce monial y ur wands
Wound th hit fa ours that ppeal to Zeus
The God of Mercy To these f e n l ds
Answering in such wise as shall move their mercy
With lamentations and all forms of speech
P pe t y ur necessity and fit
For strangers in a strange land plainly tell
The story of your flight and how from blood
'Tis wholly free. Let nought of boldness wait
On your discourse nothing of light r ai
B seen, but downward looks, untroubled eyes
Not forward in the telling of your tal
Nor hanging back t ea y t offend
Th t c that d elleth h Ne er fo g t
You cue is to submit y orn a poor
And needy suitors, h nd exiles.
Bold speech onsorts t w th the weake sid
Ch Father thy cautions find us well disposed
T prudent counsels nd thy wise precepts
I hal w th all solicitud obey
Zeus, ou progenitor wat h o er us.
D Stay not lay hold upon th means at hand

Ch I will be with you instantly O Zeus,
Pity us or we perish *They ascend the hill*
Da May he look
Graciously on us if it pleases him
All will be well. Call now upon this child
Of Zeus.
Ch I call upon the radiant Sun
The saving source of health to heal our woes,
And pure Apollo once exiled from heaven
God though he is, he knows this earthly lot
And feels perhaps for frail mortality
Da May he in very deed commiserate
And stand a ready helper by our side
Ch Which of these Gods shall I next invoke?
Da I see
The trident of the Isthmian King
Ch He gave
Fair passage to our vessel welcome fair
May he accord on land
Da And here is Hermes
After the way the Hellenes fashion him
Ch Well met indeed I pray that he may prove
A herald of glad tidings
Da Bend in awe
And adoration at the common altar
Of all these sovereignties On holy ground
Couch like a flock of doves that fear the hawk
For all his cousinship of wings. Even so
Fearful are ye of foes of your own blood
That would pollute your race And if one fowl
Prey on another how can it be pure?
And he who weds a bride against her will,
He father not consenting where shall he
Find purity? I trow that when he's dead
The doer of this deed at Hades' bar
Shall stand arraigned not idly even there,
So we believe another Zeus hold court
Among the souls whose earthly race is run
And passes final sentence on their crimes.
Look to yourselves, and to this lord return
Such answer that ye fail not in your cause
Enter PELASGUS
Pelasgus What little band is this that I salute?
When come you not, as Hellenes are attired
But with barbaric bravery of robes,
And fine veils finished with the weaver's spathe?
These woman's weed are not of Argolis
Nor any part of Hellas Here ye
Have one nor master to be your friend
Nor guide in strange land And how ye dared
Adventure here thus utterly I m
I matt for amazement By your side
Before these Gods of Festival are laid
Branches that well accord with suppliant's law
In Hellas that surmise confirms itself
For dealing must conjecture all the rest
Were there no living voice to clear the doubt.
Ch Touching our garb thy word are words of
truth
But how shall I address thee? Art thou one
Of the commonalty? Com t with formal wand
Equipped for parle? Or as of this fair realm

Foremost and chief?
Pe Let not that vex thy heart
Thou may st with full assurance answer me
I am the son of Palaechthon earth born
Pelasgus of this soil the supreme lord
And they who reap its fruits from me their king
Are called with reason good Pelasgians
Over all ground towards the setting sun
Wherethrough the Haliacmon flows I reign
Within my borders I include the land
Of the Perrhaebi and the parts beyond
Pindus adjoining the Chaonians
With the high mountains of Dodona west
I touch the salt wet frontiers of the sea
Thence all that stretches hitherward is mine
The spot whereon we stand being Apia
So called of old from one in medicine wise
Apis Apollo s son prophet and healer
Who from Naupactus crossed beyond the gulf
And purged this land of man devouring beasts
Which Earth by bloody deeds done long ago
Polluted and estranged in mood most like
A step-dame gendered to dispute her soil
With man his fanged and serpent brood fellow
For these did Apis on this Argive ground
To its no small relief with shredded herbs
And wholesome charms effect a perfect cure
His fee to be remembered in our prayers
But now that I have answered you twere well
If one of ye declared what birth ye boast
With brevity and clearness this my realm
Hath little liking for long drawn discourse
Ch Briefly and clearly then Of Argive blood
We boast to be the mother of our race
A cow made happy in the son she bare
And I will fix upon this frame of truth
Its proper parts until the whole cohere
Pe Women—strange women ye compose a tale
Not credible How can ye be of Argive blood
More like to Libyans than our womankind?
Yea such a plant might grow on Nilus bank
Methinks these forms were coined in Cyprian
mint
Struck to the life by your progenitors
Stay I have heard that nomads of your sex
Horsed upon camels ride in cushioned selles
Along the coasts of Æthiopia
They should resemble ye or on my life
Had ye but bows I could have ta en an oath
That ye were the unlorded Amazons
That fare on flesh Ye must instruct me further
I am to know more of this history
And how ye are a seed of Argive strain
Ch Runs not the story that on Argos earth
Io once kept the keys of Hera s house?
Pe 'Tis very sure she did the fame thereof
Lives yet throughout the land
Ch And more by token
The heart of Zeus was stung with love of her?
Pe Troth twas no secret Hera wrought amain
To foil his fancy
Ch And this royal quarrel
How doth it end in the story?
Pe The Argive goddess
Transformed the maid into a cow
Ch And Zeus
Is fain to have the comely beast fair horned?
Pe Indeed the tale is told so to that end
He wore the likeness of a lustful bull
Ch What counter stroke to this dealt Zeus
haught Queen?
Pe Why then she found a keeper for the cow
Him that hath eyes which look all ways at once
Ch And what was he this all beholding one
Sole neatherd of a solitary cow?
Pe Argus earth s child the same that Hermes
slew
Ch And the device that followed? What thing
else
Prepared she for the heifer heaven accursed?
Pe She did afflict her with the gnat that stings,
A drover s goad prick to stampeding kine
Ch They call him Gad fly on the banks of
Nile
Pe What? Did he drive her forth from her own
land
As far as Nile?
Ch He did so and thy tale
Tallies in each particular with mine
Pe And is it true then that she reached Canopus
And Memphis far inland?
Ch Surely and Zeus
By laying on of hands raised up a son
Pe Who then is he that boasts himself the calf
Zeus gendered on this cow?
Ch Even Epaphus
True title given from that divine caress
Pe And Epaphus—had he issue?
Ch He begat
Libya the reaper of a third of earth
Her amplest fields
Pe What scion sprang from her?
Ch My father s father Bel who had two sons
Pe Tell me I pray thy sire s all sapient name
Ch Danaus he hath a brother who begot
Two score and ten sons
Pe Prithee indulge me further
And let me hear by what name he is called
Ch Ægyptus Now thou know st my ancient
line
Stretch forth the hand of succour to raise up
Argives that here have taken sanctuary
Pe Anciently I do verily believe
A common tie unites ye to this land
But how had ye the coura e to forsake
The house of your fathers? What so sore mischance
Hath fallen on ye?
Ch King of the Pelasgians!
Calamity is as a ruffling breeze
That glances through a thousand shifting forms
Nor is there any here on earth a place
Where thou could st point and say Here
sorrow s wing
Keeps darkly constant to its native hue

For which of us in fancy ever dreamed
Of this unlooked for flight or that a ship
Wherein we sailed should touch this Argive strand
Wherewith we had affinity of old
Or that in distant Egypt wedlock scorned,
Unharried by the hymeneal choir
Should be the cause of consequence so strange?
Pr. What is the boon thou sayest thou dost crave
Here in the name of these Gods of festival,
Your branches fresh plucked all with white
 enwound
Ch. That I may never become bondslave and
 thrall
Unto Egyptus race.
P. And is it hate
That prompts thy plea or reverence of law?
Ch. Nay who among their own blood kin
 would buy
Their lords and masters?
Pr. Yet it is a match
That makes for power
Ch. And if misfortune come
Who cares if wife so wed be put away?
Pr. What shall I do then that I may be found
To-you-ward a respecter of the Right?
Ch. Refuse to yield us up to Ægyptus sons
When they demand us of thee.
Pr. There thou broachest
Grave matters that ensnare dangerous war
Ch. Yet Justice champions those that fight for
 her
Pr. If I had had my share in these events
From the beginning ——
Ch. O! Assume it now!
And, as it were, this high deck and launched poop
Of a most stately vessel honour duly
Pr. Indeed when I look round me and behold
This haunt of Gods all branched and shaded o'er
I shudder
Ch. Where is he who would not pause?
The wrath of Zeus the Suppliant's God is heavy

Close not thine ears, O son of Palaechthon,
Nor hold thy heart aloof, thou royal man,
But hearken when I cry to thee whose throne
Is over this wide realm Pelasgian.
Behold, in me a suppliant sues for grace,
A hunted thing still forced to shift her ground,
Like to a heifer with the wolves in chase
That to the herd doth low in lowly cry
Upon some rocky precipice crag-bound,
Trusting his strength and telling him her pain.

Pr. Methinks I see this gathering of the Gods
Of festival with branches freshly plucked
All waved o'er nodding in gracious assent.
Oh, may our cause who claim to be our kin
Work us no mischief, nor on any hand
Strife grow from what we neither could foresee
Nor have provided for. That to this realm
Were an unwanted a superfluous care.
Ch. Law that doth vindicate the suppliant's right,
Daughter of Zeus who deals the destiny
Look to it that I bring not in my flight
Mischief and wrong that wreck felicity
And thou with elders too sober wisdom wise
From younger hearts 'tis not too late to learn,
The noblest offering, purest sacrifice
On altars of oblation ever laid,
Sweeter than sweetest essence faith can burn,
Is mercy to the weak that ask for aid.
Pr. It is not at my private hearth ye sit
And if some public mischief be afoot
Then must the commons of this realm work out
Such expiation as shall cleanse them all.
Myself might tender no effectual pledge
But with the privity of all free men.
Ch. Thou art both liberty and law
 And commonalty thine
 An absolute prerogative
 No captious rights confine
 Thou rulest the hearth place of thy land,
 The Godhead's central shrine,
 By an indisputable nod
 Sole sceptred on thy throne
 All business that concerns the state
 Thou dost despatch alone.
 Beware lest unregarded wrong
 Let in contagion
Pr. Contagion fall upon mine enemies.
Howbeit to help thee and take myself
No hurt I scarce know how Yet twere scant
 kindness
To set thy prayers at nought. Perplexity
And fears possess my heart whether to act,
Or not to act and let fate have her way
Ch. Look up unto the Watcher set on high,
The Guardian of necessitous souls who sue
Crouched on a neighbour's hearth, for sanctuary
Craving in vain the right which is their due.
For grace denied and suppliants
 slighted pleas
Endures the wrath of Zeus no pains of guilt
 appease.
Pr. If by the law of the land Ægyptus sons
Are your rightful lords, to wit upon the plea
Of next kin, who would choose resist their claim?
Your answer must be founded on the law
Domestic and ye must maintain and prove
That over ye they have no power at all.
Ch. Into the hands of tyrant man
 God grant that I fall never
 I'll know no bounds but the starry span
 That bends o'er earth for ever
 Fled to that virgin liberty
 I'll live from forceful marriage free.
Be thou the ally of Justice and not Law
Judge thou and judge the Gods and stand of them in
 awe.
Pr. No easy judgement choose not me for judge.
Have I not said without the people's voice
I will not and I cannot king though I be
Do as thou'lt have me do? I will not hear—
If it should chance that aught untoward fall—

Reproachful commons cast it in my teeth
To honour strangers thou didst wreck thy land!
Ch Ancestral Zeus of both blood kin
Eyes suppliant and pursuer
The ponderable stuff of sin
Is charged to the wrong doer
Quick is the tell tale hand to mount
And reckon to the just s account
The fair record of righteousness
Since equal is the poise why shrink from fair redress?
Pe This asks deep thought an eye within the mind
Keen as a diver salving sunken freight
To sink into the depths yet searching there
Not lose itself in roving phantasies
That all end well and mischief follow not
First for the State which is our chief concern
Then for ourselves and neither war lay hold
On loot to pay your loss nor by our act
If from this seat of Gods that ye have made
Your seat we yield you up the land be crushed
By haunting visitations of the God
Whose business is destruction Alastor
The unforgetting instrument of wrath
Who even in the house of Hades suffers not
The dead man to go free And asks not this
Heart searchings fathom deep of saving thought?

Chorus

Search deep and then rise up more strong
For justice be the minister
That reverentially protects from wrong
The stranger and the sojourner
Resolved never to yield while thou stand st by
An exile driven so far in godless outlawry

O look not on till rapine come
And from these haunts of Powers divine
Hale me for spoil all masterdom
All judicature here are thine
Then in this cause let thy decree go forth
Man s lusts here sue for judgment and beware of *wrath*

Submit not to the sight
Of divine Justice set at naught by might
And the rejected suppliant led away
From statues holy as by bands of gold
A horse is led while rough men lay
Rude hands upon my *raiment s damask fold*

Thy seed and thy household
As thou art cruel or in mercy bold
The exact measure of thy yea or nay
Eternal Law shall utterly requite
O ponder well these things and sway
The event as Zeus commands who judgeth right

Pe Nay I have pondered and my bark of thought
Strikes on this point of peril There s no choice
But of two sides I must take arms gainst one
And either were a war of magnitude.
Here then you have the naked shell stark hull
Triced on the stocks all rivets driven home
And all her timbers strained and drawn together
As twere with *shipwright s winches Once at sea*
She s bound for loss before she comes to land
When there is jettison of merchandize
By the good grace of Zeus the Garnisher
More may be gotten a full load to freight
A ship of deeper draught And if the tongue
Shoot wildly for the wound that words inflict
Words will apply the remedy a balm
For angry humours spell and counterspell
But that there be no letting of the blood
Of kin compels to earnest sacrifice
And many victims unto many gods
Where er men ask of oracles must fall
Preservatives against calamity
My entrance to this quarrel comes unsought
And every way tis to my own undoing
I d rather be a seer of little skill
Than deeply learned in prophesying ill
So though my judgment goes not with the prayer
Out of these troubles Heaven send issue fair
Ch Hear the conclusion then of my much speech
That meant to move your pity
Pe I have heard
But speak I mark thee closely
Ch I have scarves
And girdles that hold up my raiment—
Pe Why
All women have them
Ch *Out of these I ll fashion*
An ornament and excellent device
To keep mine honour safe
Pe Give thy words meaning
What is it thou would st say?
Ch Give us a pledge
Plant on some ground of faith these feeble feet
If not—
Pe These gatherings girdlings up of robes
How shall they stead thee?
Ch *They shall serve to deck*
These shapes with votive tablets never yet
Hanged up on hallowed images
Pe A riddle!
The manner of this expound
Ch Incontinent
We ll hang ourselves upon these holy Gods
Pe *Thy menace lays the lash across my heart*
Ch I see thou understand st me now have I
Opened thine eyes to clearer vision
Pe Yea
Turn where I may griefs ineluctable
Confront my sight a multitude of ills
Comes on like a river on this sea of ruin
I am embarked the bottomless abyss
Below around unnavigable waves
And nowhere any harbour from distress
If I shall fail towards you and not exact
This debt which is your right ye threaten me
With such pollution strain words how ye will

H pethe cannot o ershoot th mark.
And if I stand before the city wall
And the conclusions w h Egyptus sons
Your own blood kin, upon t head of battle,
For sake of women men must stain this earth
W blood and were not th b t r expense
T arm myself w thal Y t ther s no help
B I must bow m we the wrath f Zeus
Who beheth suppliants the fear of him
I for all men t h hest fear Now therefore
Thou earth father of these maids,
Take in th hands branches like these and lay them
On her altars of my country Gods.
That of veer com all t citizens
May see visible token l t not fall
One word of m th commonalty loves
To cast reproach upon their rulers. But,
Looking thereon, pity ma move some soul
W h ha red for the wickedness of men
Bound against you and th p bl heart
B for our boughs more tender 'Tis a trait
Common with men to entertain kind thoughts
Towards the weaker side.

Da. That w ha e found a friend
Friend and God fearing w account
Worth ma favours. W t thou grant one more
And with me send some man to this land
For escort and as guides, that we may find
The altars of the city divers
That stand before t temples, and the shrines
Of those more was that defend your keep
Th form th na ure ga e us is not yours,
Nor are w habited as ye are. N
Nourish th other folk than L
Beware lest an unheeded consequence
Hereafter breed dismay Men ha e ere now
Slain those that were their friends, not knowing t

P Go w h t s stra er men to h ss well.
Show him the way t the town altars and
The seats of Gods. And look e brut t not
At cross-roads that bear this seafarer
To on t hearths of th Hol Ones.

Exit Da. with bodyguard.

Ch. For him th word is spoken let him go
S thou commandest t B t what of me
Wh shall I do, and er doe thou assign
For me place of safety

P Lea e t branches
W thou art now s a token of distress.

Ch. I l them where th hand and tongue direct.

P Now thou art free t walk bout this smooth
level lawn.

Ch. This lawn where all ma tread
And how shall that protect me

P Be content
'Tis not our purpose to expose thee here
A prey for birds.

Ch. For bird And wha of foes
More dangerous than serpents

P Fair and softly!
Thou see st I speak thee fair

Ch. It is not strange
That fear betray uneasiness.

Pe Methinks
Th awe of kings ex eed th ermore
All fears beside.

Ch. O cheer me with kind words!
And hearten me no less with gracious deeds.

Pe Na but tis not for lon that thy good sire
Hath left thee. I too lea e thee for a while,
B t tis to call our folk together make
Th commons th good friend and teach thy fath r
How h should speak to them. Tarry meantime,
Therefore, and with thy prayers prevail upon
The gods of th land to grant thy heart desire.
I will depart hence and make good my words.
Persuasion and fair fortune follow us!

Exit Pel sgus. The Da aides descend on to the open lawn below the hill.

Chorus

King of Kings, among th Blest
In th bliss the blessedest,
In thy power of all that are
Mightier m htiest by far
Happy *Zeus*, that pra er receive,
And th event our wish achieve.
Dri e a oof the l sts of men
W h th loath visit them
Plunge neath an empurpled sea
That embodied infamy
Pitched without and black within
W th ha oc and t purposed sin.
But the woman s cause espouse
Think upon our storied house
Tenderly th tal renewin
Of old lov and tener wooing
And our an estress to be
Woman, yet once dear to thee.
Ah, remember Lon Ago,
Thou Comforter of Io s woe!
For we boast that we can tra
H h Zeus our ancient ra
Sojourners were we t birth
This is home, this parent earth.

I t print flower sweet
Of m mother's feet,
Behold, I ha e pass ed mine
Where sh swooned to feed
Kneed ep in the mead
That fattens the Argi e kine
And with her alway
T haunt and betra
Th ey f th earthborn herd.
Far hence lies her road,
B th gadfl goad,
As skiff with th oar blade stirred
Sh must know the pain
Of a maddened brain
And wander through many races,
Till twixt either strand
Of the sundered land
A path through the billows she traces.

To the Asian shore
She must pass o er
And ever her onward leap
Of her coming tells
To the Phrygian fells
And the fleecy moorland sheep
By street and tower
That Teuthras power
Founded for Mysian men
In olden time
She speeds she must climb
Through Lydian gorge and glen
And she must o erleap
The Cilician steep
And the wild Pamphylian mountains
No barrier
Shall be to her
Till fed by eternal fountains
Broad rivers glide
And her footsteps guide
Through a pleasant land and a mighty
With all wealth crowned
The fair the renowned
Wheatland of Aphrodite

And still she flew a hunted thing
Of Heaven s grace unpitied
And in and out with darting sting
In dizzy reel and dazzling ring
The winged herdsman flitted

She has reached at last Zeus own demesne
That is to all Nature boon
Green with the glow of the melting snow
And scorched by the Typhoon

She has come to the tide that is deep and wide
Untouched by the hand of disease
Yea to Nile s water King Inachus daughter
Hera s crazed Thyiad flees

Paled then all dwellers in that lea
With quaking fear a cold
Such hybrid shape they ne er did see
Half woman and half cow was she
A monster to behold

A freakish eerie elfin form
Whose kind twere hard to tell
If human out of human shape
Tortured by some dread spell

Ah then to charm away her grief
Who at long last relented
And rested the far wandered feet
Of Io the gnat tormented?

Even Zeus Lord Paramount *whose reign*
Expects no earthly tyrant s bloody doom
He eased her of her pain
With sweet constraint from all enforcement free
And breathings of his love divinely mild
Tears as of one half reconciled
She shed—warm tears of bitter memory
But with that heavenly burthen in her womb
Became the mother of a perfect child

A happy long lived man was he
Wherefore a voice went through that fertile earth
Behold in verity
This is the son of Zeus this is the seed
He sowed who else among the Gods had stayed
The crafty plots that Hera laid?
If thou should st say Here is Zeus very deed
This is a child of heavenly birth
Clean to the centre shall thine arrow speed

What God to thee should I prefer
And by a title holier
Ask Justice? Thou O King
Our Father art and thy right hand
Hath planted us in a strange land
We are thine own offspring

Thou great unmatched artificer
In thy calm heart let memory stir
The pulse of vanished days
O Zeus that art in all things blest
And whatso er thou purposest
None hinders nor gainsays!

Thou art no vassal on a throne
No power that doth transcend thine own
To thee dictates the law
Nor is there one in higher place
To whom thou turn st a humble face
Holding his seat in awe

Art thou in labour with the pang
Of deeds whereon great issues hang
Behold the accomplished fact!
Or if in words goes forth thy breath
The mind that with them travaileth
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Enter DANAUS

Da Take courage children the people of the land
With sovran voice have cast their votes right well
Ch Dear envoy! Best beloved of tiding bearers
All hail! But hide not one thing from us What
Have they determined? The full master hand
Of the assembled commons to what deed
Points it?
Da Unwaveringly and in such wise
As made my old heart young—for the free air
While all freemen made this decision law
Rustled with multitudes of lifted hands—
The Argives have decreed that we shall hold
This soil with them immune from all reprisals
Havoc and harrying of the lustful male
And of those native here or alien
No man may drive us hence withal if force
Be offered what so denizen withholds

His aid, shall suffer loss of civil rights
And, furthermore, be banished by the State.
This was the manner of the speech, whereby
The King of the Pelasgians in our cause
Wrought on his auditors with warning voice
Lest in the hereafter days the realm
Feed fat the wrath of Zeus, the Suppliant's God
We came as foreigners and forerunners,
As citizens we were received: two claims
Centred in our persons, which, denied,
Would work two-fold contagion, and raise up
Before the city as a monster fed
On sorrow yet whose craw grief cannot cram.
Then they stayed not to hear the marshal's cry
But on a show of hands would have it so.
It was the voice of the Pelasgians' King
That moved them, swaying the persuasive word
But Zeus determined what the end should be.

He ascends the hill.

Chorus

Oh come! Let us render
Recompense fair!
A token and tender
Of thanks and prayer
That good things be showered upon Argos.
Benediction and laud and honour
In hymns to her praises sun,
Shall ever be doubled upon her
For deeds in an alien tongue
To Zeus who cares for the stranger
And governs the counsels of kings
To an end free from harm and danger
May he lead our thankful things,
With good gifts shed upon Argos.

Lo, your heavenly habitation,
While I pour my heart's libation
With the wine of prayer overflown
Hear my voice, ye Gods. Hereafter
Never fire of ruddy hue
Shall consume the Pelasgian towers,
Nor the song be heard, where laughter
Is not, nor the dance nor lyre,
Lewd Ares joyless strain,
Who in fields not of his sown
Reaps the harvest of the slain.
Forasmuch as they had ruth
For that low their voice ingreeth,
Heaven's suzerain Zeus befriendeth,
Little flock that sorrow tendeth
And whose portion none desireth.

Neither did they give their voices
For proud men, to do them pleasure.
They have dealt us noble measure.
Woman's weaker cause befriending
For their longer vision saw
The inexorable Awe,
Angry Zeus, whose wrath requiteth,
Whose sure aim the end acquireth
And with him is no contending

Where is the dwelling that rejoices
'Neath his heavy visitation—
Like a carrion bird that lighteth,
Dropping down abomination,
Gorged and bowed on man's eaves?
Heavily the monster squatteth,
An unlifted, leaden burden.
But these kin have no rejected
Claim of kin: they have erected
Suppliants at Zeus' holy seat.
Therefore they shall have their guerdon,
Altars no pollution spotteth,
To the Gods of Heaven sweet.

Forth, thou bird of plume more fair
From the mouth's dark covert break,
Emulous and eager prayer:
All prayers else do thou o'ertake.

Never pestilence nor dearth
Empty Argos of her men
Nor civil tumult stain this earth
With blood of fallen brethren.

Youth be here an unplucked flower
And Ares, who makes men to mourn,
Though lord of Aphrodite's bower
That comely blossom leave unborn.

And, where ancient men convene
Let there not want within these walls
Bearded benchers of grave mien
Throned in old Cyclopean stalls.

So may wise laws and well-obeyed
Order all things in the land,
Long as reverence is paid
To Zeus, and chiefly Him whose hand

Is over strangers. He alone
Maintains the right against wrong and crime
And confirms to each his own
By law and precept old with time.

Everything that fruitful is
Spring anew from fecund earth,
And may arrowy Artemis
Bring the struggling babe to birth.

Hither, come not to rive this land
Nor bring no arms for Ares' hand,
Who loveth neither dance nor lyre—
Children he hath but desire
But they are tears, nor the drawn knife
What for the dagger hand of strife
And civil uproar keep far hence,
The croaking flocks of pestilence
And all young things in this fair ground
Be with thy love, Lycean, crowned.

Zeus make the earth to teem, and bless
With seasonable toll and cess

To the Asian shore
She must pass o er
And ever her onward leap
Of her coming tells
To the Phrygian fells
And the fleecy moorland sheep
By street and tower
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As made my old heart young—for the free air
While all freemen made this decision law
Rustled with multitudes of lifted hands—
The Argives have decreed that we shall hold
This soil with them immune from all reprisals
Havoc and harrying of the lustful male
And of those native here or alien
No man may drive us hence withal if *force*
Be offered what so denizen withholds

Can wolf nor can the byblus-fruit compare
With wheaten corn.

Ch. They are as savage beasts,
As fierce and as lust and all uncleanness
We must defend ourselves against their attack
As quickly as we may

Da. Nay there is time
Fleets neither set sail nor are brought to anchor
In a moment nor when anchors hold,
Are men who shepherd ships so quick to moor
And trust their safety to a cable's stretch.
And least of all when they have come to a land
That hath no haven, and night draweth on.
For when the sun departeth, night breeds care
For a good seaman troops cannot be landed
When a ship is ill shipped can be safely berthed.
Then with quiet mind be vigilant
And ever mindful of the Gods, that so
I make their succour certain. For the state,
They will not need to blame your messenger
Because he old. For with the spirit of youth
Here in my heart it needs must prompt my tongue.
Exit.

Chorus

Ho Land of hills—
Protectress, held in awe
Of old—now by new bond of treaty law
Knit our hearts—what ills
Must we yet suffer at the hand of men
Where shall we find of ... one
Lo, this Apian earth is there no ... en,
No ... of darkness borrowed from the sun,
Where ... may hid
I would I were black smoke ... dim
Drawn upward to the cloud of Zeus bright day
Or ... I ... way
Soaring ... none should see nor none
Follow lost in the wind
Of heaven like dust that needs no wing
To ... in ... vanishing
No refuge left
No shelter from the slow
... on fair ... woe.
As waters in a cleft
My heart bond ... turbulent and black
And this last touch of bitterest ...
... in themselves the ... do not lack.
That all ... looketh forth to sea
...
Till for fear ... ceased to be.
I would ... neck noose were bound
I would that there ... found
... for Liberty
Ere ... amorous ...
Recoil ... feel the touch abhorred,
I would that I were dead and Hades had for lord.

Oh for throne ...
... moist and drenched cloud
Too ... and is turned to snow
Oh for smooth and slippery rock
Where the wild goat fears to climb
And no intruding son of Time
Points a finger Lone and bare
And wrapped in contemplation proud
It overhangs the gulf below
There lean vultures harp and flock
And as if indeed it were
A living ... its blind wall
Shall bear record of my fall
Headlong—all my sorrows ended
And heartless love which is heart's rending

Then, I grudge not does their prey
Then, this body of mine shall feast
Birds that haunt the valley grounds.
There's no anguish in such wounds
They can never bleed afresh.
Death ... be released
From all ills our living flesh
Would with wailing wash away
Come with swift forestalling stride
Death, ere darker deed be done
In the chamber of the bride.
For of all the paths that run
O'er the broad earth ... the sun
That which leads to the unwinding
Of my sorrow is past finding.

Cry to Heaven prayers full oblation
Moves the Gods and sets me free.
Father from thy habitation
Watch the battle soon to be.

Turn away from ... the splendour
Of those eyes whose light is law
Strong, be thou the weak's defender
Zeus, who bodest the world in awe

For the man hath sought and found me.
Flee ... whither shall I flee?
Egypt's sons will soon have bound me
Wildered with their battle-cry

Though thy mighty beam suspended
All ... trembling in thy scale.
What can be begun or ended
Without thee for bliss or bale.

Oh me I am undone!
What evil errand brought thee ashore,
Pirate? A rescue! Ho!
This is the entering in of woe,
But ... will follow—more!
To ... the protectors run!
Pelasgus—Lord
When their hard hearts with pangs they cannot bear!

The chorus is scared to hell. Enter an EGYPTIAN HERALD *with* SAILORS.

Herald. Aboard! Aboard!
Get to the ... as fast as feet can carry ye!
Else I'll pluck out your hair

Of gathered fruit and corn in shocks
And may the forward feeding flocks
In her rich pastures multiply
And all things have prosperity
By the Gods favour flourishing
Let minstrels round her altars sing
Sweet lauds and while the lute leads on
Pure lips send up their orison

A power obnoxious to no term
Be here not novel and infirm
Soon blown and soon decayed
But on old honour stayed
Prescient in counsel and withal
Of such foreknowledge liberal
Not jealous to exclude
The sovran multitude
But rather guide them And abroad
Let them be slow to draw the sword
Much readier to maintain
By processes humane
Their legal right than prompt to act
If bounden faithful to their pact
Their arbiter the Court
And war their last resort
Let them keep fasts and festivals
Bring wreaths of bay and slaughter bulls
As did their sires of old
To the Lord Gods who hold
Their land For reverence and awe
From son to sire is the third law
Justice hath writ for men
With monumental pen

Da Dear children I commend these temperate prayers
Tremble not if I break to you bad news
From this our sanctuary and my watch tower
I see the ship No I am not mistaken
All too discernible is the sail—so bent—
The awnings—and the prow with painted eyes
That look before on the untravelled road—
And the quick sense too quick for those she loves not
To hearken to the guiding of the helm
The men on board their black limbs clothed in white
Are plain to see And now the other craft
Store ships and all are in full view The admiral
Is shortening sail and all oars out rows hard
Under the lee of the land This must be faced
With a fixed constancy let not dismay
Divert your thoughts from these still watchful Gods
I will return anon when I have gotten
Defence and counsel Like enough a herald—
Or delegates that mean to force you hence—
Graspers at harsh reprisals—nay but that
Can never be and ye've no cause to fear it
Nevertheless if human aid be slow
Remember here ye have a present help
Be of good cheer then where is he who scorns
The Gods and shall not in Time s great assize
Upon the day appointed answer it?
He descends from the hill

Chorus

Father I am afraid the ships have come
So quickly with scant interval between

I am possessed with dread
Doubts and fears importune me
Lest that my flight far sped
No way should fortune me

Oh when the goal is won
The struggle nought availeth me
Father I am fordone
For fear my strength faileth me

Da Child pluck up courage The recorded vote
Of Argos is a sovran people s voice
Certain I am that they will fight for thee

Chorus

Ægyptus sons are wild abandoned men
Their lust of battle hard to be appeased
And if I say so thy heart knows tis true

They *have gotten them stalwart ships*
The stout oak braces
They have gotten them shining ships
With cruel steely faces

They set a course o er unknown waves
They struck an unseen quarry
And multitudes of tawny slaves
Summoned to their foray

Da Ay but they ll meet their match a multitude
Whose arms by oft exposure to the blaze
Of burning noon are firm as marble filed
Ch I pray you leave me not alone my father
Left to herself a woman is but nought
She hath no stomach for brave deeds of war
But they are men in mind and heart deranged
Possessed yea mad with godless lust and pride
The human soul in them so much estranged
From holy thoughts mercy and truth and awe
They reck them less than crows with beak and claw
That rob the altars of things sanctified
Da My children this shall nothing profit them
That which provokes in you resentful thoughts
Shall work the wrath of the immortal Gods
Ch Father they fear no tridents neither can
Arrow or thunderbolt restrain their hands
They are too much swollen with their own conceit
For awe to sway them and in violent pride
Have run too far to stay their reckless feet
For aught that preacheth from these holy bounds
But like a pack of disobedient hounds
They would not hear though all the Gods should chide
Da Ay but three dogs are not a match for one

And th re an end No long ere th t can be
Many a tall fellow first must bite the dust
And h es be gasped a ay with writhin of limbs
P Why should I tell thee who I am? In t me
Thou lt learn my name thou and thy fello s too
As for these omen went they willingly
Were they cont t th u m ht st lead them away
Could st th u sh w cause that piety allows
B t now th so ran people of th s realm
Ha e w th one oice est blished their decree
Never to y ld the r virtue up to f rce
And throu h and through that act the nail is
dri en
So that it standeth fast Th u hast my answer
N t nt n folded tablets, or yet sealed
In any sec t scroll but o ert th plain speech
Of an unf tte ed tongue. Now—quit my si ht
H May vict ry and power that ict ry gives
Be ith the men.
Pe Oh ye w ll find men here
Trust me, no bousers of thin barley brew
Exit HERALD *a d h s f llowers*
And n w w th your handmaidens all of you
Walk boldly t the city 'Tis well fenced
And locked w th deep de nce of wards and towers.
Many fair dwellings are maintained there
At the public cha ge With o liberal ha d
Myself am lodged. Here ye may share house
W th thers, or if it likes ye l al ne
The best is at your service take y ur choi e
And let it be the fairest ye can find
'Twill cost ye nothi g Look upon myself
And the hole body of the c tizens,
Whose mandat th s effects, as y ur protectors.
More powerful pat ns y e no ed t ask.
Ch S e may your great o tesy
Plenteously r arded be
Please you ow to send t us
Ou bra father Dan us
H s se f thou ht pot ts our way
Where he counsels we bey
He ll hoose us ur abode
I some kindly neighbou hood
For so it is, tra e speech stra g ways
Are a ma k fo m n s dispr ise
H ppier be our lot may e
Dw ll th honour in your la d
F ee from hat ed cen u free *Exit* KING.
Capu es f th bo a d pear
Yet ot cherished n t less dear
Each word r t ke your tand
By your must esses, f you
A our ma d n r t nue
That Dana hi d y of po er
Ga u f a q eenly dower
Enter D *t ith armed guard*
Da Ch ld en, to the A g es ff r prayers,
Blood-off rings and libat s, as t Gods
Of mpian? f ou sa ours the e
Past q est on. When I t ld the ma trates
How ye er used their f endl hea ts ece ed
My tid gs in such wise as to our kin

Shall pro e a drau ht of b tter wine Myself
Th s body gua d of spearmen they ass ned
Both that I might be honourably attended
And lest by sudden sw rd stroke I should fall
Ere th y could rescue me unto their land
A burden a d a curse for e er Wherefore
L t gratitud to them hold in your hearts
The h hest pl ce a d set your course Moreo er
To much already graven there add this
Paternal precept Time assays the worth
Of th ngs unknown and e ery t ngue is busy
W th a n w-comer s reputation n t
Oftenest fo good a word and t s bespattered
Shame m not in yo r youth wh n all men s eyes
Will look your way 'Tis d fficult to guard
The tender fruit It is desired of men
With patient watchin s—for desire is human—
Of feathered fowls nd beasts th t walk the earth
So with the body when tis m llow ripe
Trust Cy pris but the world will hear of it
If nce she find the orchard gate unlatched
Th n at th l elines of v rg n bloom
A arro win ed with d n erous charm is shot
From e ery rovin eye anquished at sight
By irresistible des e Let not
Our walls succumb to that the which to escape
We bo e much toil, ploughed many perilous seas
On shipboard neither l t us wo k oursel es
Sham and co fusi n to mine enem es
Triumph and very bliss A double choice
Is ou s Pelasgus a d the State at large
Ea h off r us home a d both are f ee.
You see Fate throws us s res. It emains
That y your fath r s p ecepts str ctly keep
Cou t n your rtu dea er th n your lives

Choru

I ll thi gs else may the Olympian Gods
Prospe us For my y uth fear n t my father
In th s ripe season of my beauty If
The God ha e n t appointed some new thing
I mea to walk where heretofo e I trod

Set f rward to the city th n
And t her God gi e th ks,
Lo d of thei bliss with her walls
Or dwellers by th banks

Of Erasi us old And y u
Dear ma d ur music sweet
Acc mpany w th clappi g hands
And da ce of rhythmic feet!

Our son t of Pelasg a s town
And w w ll hym more
The f ll ess of the fluctuant Nile
But placid stream that pour

Deep dra ghts f th rsty lips, a d cheer
Th land w th ch ld sh m rth
T ning stuff tra t f t bbo grou d
To soft and fertile earth

Drive ye before me with the slaver s goad
Hack heads off till blood spouts like rain
Back to the ship again
And may the red plague harry ye!
Ch I would that somewhere on the weltering road
Of multitudinous ocean ye had sunk
That of its bitter waters ye had drunk
Enough to drown your bark and quench your pride
Then were we happy sitting side by side
Even as now we were
Free from trouble free from care
Hid in this leafy bower
Once and for all hear my commands lay by
Violence and wrong and mad impiety
Hence from this holy spot
And anger not
The Argive power
Ah may I never see again the flood
That fatteneth the flesh of Egypt s kine
And breeds a procreant humour in man s blood
Even as sap clothes the bare bough with green
Argive I am of long descended line
Queen and the daughter of a Queen
He Rant—rail your fill
But whether ye will not or ye will
Ye must aboard!
Ch Alack! Why tarry they?
Make speed or we are lost!
He If ye delay
From where ye sit I ll drag ye with these hands
Ch O er ocean lawns sheeted with salt sea spume
May ye be dragged and driven to and fro
With helpless tossings of these cruel hands
Where from the Syrian coast the wild winds blow
With wailing heard along the mounded sands
Beneath Sarpedon s tomb
He Shriek wail and howl and call upon the Gods
Tis not so light a thing to overleap
A ship of Egypt Wherefore tune thy voice
To sadder music a more bitter curse
Ch The dark wave whelm thee rounding ness on ness
Where Cyprus forests clothe her capes of wrath
And Nile that mighty Nile which sent thee forth
Strike out thy name—one insolent the less
He Aboard! Aboard! The ship has put about
Ready to go to sea Get thee aboard
Or I will lug thee by the forelock

He rushes at the DANAIDES *followed by his men*

Ch Father a thing in human shape and yet
A lurker in the net
That Evil spins for mortal woe
Like an industrious spider to and fro
Weaves link by link and thread by thread
Its latticed snare
Earth Mother Earth the spectre dread
The black nightmare
Drive far away
O Mother Earth! O Father Zeus I pray!
He I am not fearful of your Argive Gods
They suckled not my youth nor fed my age
Ch What shall I call thee? A two-footed snake,
A viper creeping from the brake
With venomed fang to bruise
My heel O Mother Earth
Drive hence the beast of monstrous birth!
Hear Mother Earth! Hearken O Father Zeus!
He Get thee aboard and with a better grace
Else shall thy gauzes muslins and thy veils
Cry out for ruth and rending reck them not
Ch They overpower me! Chiefs, lords princes, save!
He Anon anon! Courage! Thou soon shalt have
Princes enow Ægyptus fifty sons!
Be of good cheer thou shalt not lack for lords!
Ch Lost lost—O King—O sacrilegious slave!
He I have thee now heave her aboard by the hair
She s a slack one and slow of hearing

Enter PELASGUS *with armed* ATTENDANTS

Pe Hold!
Ruffian what s this? How darest thou insult
Pelasgian soil ay and Pelasgia s sons?
Or dost thou think thou rt come to a land where none
But women dwell? Barbarian to Greek
Is used to be more humble Thou wilt find
That thy wild shooting misses the just scope
And aim of action reckoning up thy wrong
He I take thee at thy word and ask thee where
I reach beyond what law and justice warrant?
Pe First thou rt an alien yet most ignorant
Of what becomes thee in that quality
He Who? I? I found what had been lost no more
Pe Have not you aliens your officers?
And which of these didst thou bespeak?
He Hermes
The Lord of trover
Pe O! are Gods thy patrons
And dost thou serve them with dishonour?
He I
Pay worship to the Gods of mighty Nile
Pe *And ours are nought if I hear thee aright*
He Look you these women are mine and in my power
Let me see him who dares to take them from me
Pe Lay hands upon them at thy peril
He This
To a stranger! Tis not hospitable
Pe Tush!
I waste no courtesy on aliens
Who violate the sanctuary of the Gods
He Ægyptus sons shall hear of this
Pe I care not
I Good but that I may make a clear report—
As heralds should—what shall I say? By whom
Am I dismissed sent empty handed back
The e women—cousins close in blood withal—
Taken from me? Not that weight of evidence
Will here determine in what sense the doom
That Ares must pronounce shall be decreed
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THE PERSIANS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ATOSS *Queen f Persia widow of Dari s*
a d m ther f Xerxes
A MESSE G R
T E GH ST O D RIUS
XE XES
C R S OF PERSI N ELDERS *the Ministers*
f State

A open place before the Tomb f DARIUS

Chorus

We re the faithful ministers
Of P rsia s abse t sons,
That mar hed a ay t H llas
Their g lde mansio s,
Ri h w th all wealth nd plendour
Are in our trust nd care
For th great ki g King Xerxes,
Darius son nd heir
Chose us wise men well n years
Th realm f r him t hold
But f his homewa d p ogress
His host gleam with gold
Th bod heart harried
W th uguries of ill
Asia tripped f manhood
A oung king hath his will
B t t this m tropolitan
P oud sieg f Pe sia ki gs
N run r mes, o rid
Good w o bad news brings.
To Susa nd Ecbatana
They bad l farewell
They saw behi d them sink fr m sight
Old Kissia tadel
And some od out on h rseback,
And som in long h ps sailed
Stout plodders closing p their ranks
The footm t od all mailed.
Amist es hast th w th them,
And g eat Artaph enes,
Asta pes, Megabates,
Lord f rich satr pies,
Ki gs hose thr a g eater
l majest uprears,
Marshals f an uncou ted host
Bo men and ca ali rs,
They sweep fo e onwa d
Thei da ting looks dismay
And j bilant thei hi h heart
F r y f omi g fray
Lo d f the bow Imaeus,
Sosthenes, charioteer
Artembares, the rider bold
Whom charg ng squadrons cheer
M tres and Pharand ces
W th many a dou hty f re
Whom N l great nourish r of men
Sent forth Pegastogon
Egyptia born Susi kanes
And Artames, whose wone
Is sacred Memphis th re he rules
And Ariomardus l rd
O Thebes, that ancient ch ld of T me
Marsh folk to pull aboard
The galleys, fearsome combatants
Past count and n their train
The la gour lo ing Lyd ans,
Lords of the Asian ma n
Tw roy l men command them,
Arcteus of fair renown
And the great l rd M trogathes
And their ll g ld n town,
Sardis, hath se t forth men that ride
O cars of aspect d ead
W th do bl yoke of horses,
And triple harnessed
And Tharubis and M rdon,
Of Tmolus holy h ll
Nea eighbours both ha e ta en an oath
(The wh ch may hea en fulfil)
T cast the yok Hellas
That h ld th freedom dea
Th y are the st ff of iron tough
H rd an ls to th spear
The m the Mysian slingers
And g lde B bylon
Hath sent a mingled m tley host
Endlessly wind ng on
And som sail rs f th fleet
And thers draw the bow
All Asia pours her falchi n men
The g eat king bid them go
Ay th y e go e! The bloom, the rose,
Th pride of Persian ea th
And w th a mighty longing

Chaste Artemis watch over us
And love come in tender guise
Not forced by Cytherea s might
We wish our foes that prize

Semi Chorus But we forget not Cypris Let none deem
Our harmless song is meant in her dispraise
For she with Hera sways
The heart of Zeus and he is Lord Supreme
The subtle Goddess hath her rites with young
Desire playing at his mother s side
Nor less Persuasion to whose charming tongue
No boon that heart can give or worth approves
May be denied
Yea music hath her share
In Aphrodite s Empire fair
Music with all the train of whispering Loves
Semi Ch All is fulfilled as Destiny decrees
And Zeus is great it is not given to men
To thwart his purposes
Or reach beyond the bounds that he hath set
Pray rather then
That once the rite be said
This marriage that we so much dread
May bring more bliss than ever wife knew yet
Semi Ch May the great Zeus grant that I ne er
Wed with a son of King Ægyptus
Semi Ch Yea
That boon were best of all and yet thy prayer
Would move a will that none can sway
Semi Ch And thou can st not discern futurity
Semi Ch Can I behold the mind of Zeus? Can I
Look into that unfathomable deep?
Due measure when thou prayest thou should st keep
Semi Ch Where lies the mark that may not be o ertrod?
Semi Ch Search not too far the purposes of God

Chorus

Zeus is King may he decree
I be bounden to no lord
Loathed for lust and cruelty!
Mighty and most gentle he
With remedial touch restored
Io in her misery
To calm of mind from sorrow free

And may he this woman s war
Crown with victory Life and Fate
Demand that we exact no more
Than that good preponderate
It contents me then whate er
The judgment which the Gods approve
If there be embodied there
Justice which my prayers could move

Exeunt

Where in my arms the great Darius lay
My heart too feels the canker fret of care
Good friends, I ha e as ory for your ears
That wakes within a train of haunting fears.

What if great wealth should scatter in his stride
The prosperous glory that Darius reared
God ben with him? Doubts new felt divid
M mind. Possessions must not be revered
S as men use them yet they that ha e none
How poor! T them what lustr hath th sun?

For in themsel es great riches are not wron
That's not my fear but when th master's eye
Through absence fails, the thou ht in me is strong,
A house is blind except its lord be by
Herein, gra e sirs, interpr t and ad ise
I your sage counsel all my wisdom lies.

Ch. Be sure of this, Queen of this land of ours,
There ever was nor e er can be need
To ask us twice for help by word or deed
So far as our experience empowers
Leal hearts t proffer guidance in our breast
There is no thought save how t serve thee best

A. I am much con ersant w th dreams t ni ht
Since with his army my dear son is gone
To ravage and lay waste Ionia
B t nothing yet so startling, l dist ct
As estern t, as you shall forthwith hear
For there ppeared to m in bright pparel
Two women on h Persian robes dorned,
Th ther in the Dorian ga b and each
Taller in statur than are women now
F ultless l fair both sisters of one house.
The first in H llas dwelt b sortileg
Assigned th other li ed in Barbary
A so t was, that in m dream m thou ht
Th re was som kind of quarrel twixt th twain,
Which, w en my dear son was apprised of t
H would compose nd mak them li as friends.
And so he harnessed them to a chariot
Lashi g their necks to th yok And th tall form
Clad in our raiment answ ed to th rein
B t th other struggled tore th ta kle p
And without bit or bridle b takin loos
Snapped the iron yok asunder M son fell
And sudden y h father stood beside him,
E en Darius, sorry for his fall.
This is t vision I beheld la t ni ht.
But n I rose nd in fair flowi stream
Had washed m hands, so leansed for sacrifice
I stood bef re n altar purposin
To mak m fr n f th lemen s
T th Di ine Forfenders, whose indeed
Th off is. And lo, an ea l fled
T Phoebus' hearth brazier! Good my friends
When I saw that I wa stru k dumb w th fear
And presently a falcon flew at him
Beat him about th bod with ts wings,
And with t claws his proud est feathers
plucked
And strange—and passin strange—the eagle
quailed
Nor dared at all retaliate. What I saw
Filled me with dread and will affright your ears.
Well do ye know that if our son succeed
He will become the wonder of the world
And even if he fail there is no law
Can call him to account but unimpaired
Lif granted him his throne is o er this land

Ch. Mother we would not by au ht we might say
Alarm unduly or raise hopes too h gh.
Better approa h the gods, better go pray
If shapes fu ly seeming haunt thine eye,
Beseech them to deli er thee from ill
And for thyself, thy child en and the State
And all thou lo est good thin s to fulfil.
This done with drink-offeri s propitiate
Earth and the dead and then entreat thy spouse,
Darius, whom thou say st that estern ght
Thou did st behold for thee and for thy house
Up from the underworld into the li ht
To send good luck and adverse th ngs blindfold
Muffle in nether darkness. N t untau ht
By my proph t c soul have I mad bold
To speak, convinced so best may good be sou ght.

A. Well, com what may my dream hath found
in thee
A first expounder loyal to our son
And all our house May fair as fair can be
Befall. I ll get me hom All shall be done
In honour of th gods and the dear dead
That dwell beneath the earth, as thou hast said.
B t good my friends, tell me where Athens lies?

Ch. Far far away westwards—beyond these
skies—
Where kingly Helios pales his golden fi es.

At. I that the land that our dear son desires,
Goin on so long a chase to make his prey?

Ch. Assuredly if Athens own his sway
All Hellas must before his footst ool bend

At. I t great people? Can this Athens send
'Gainst him a numerous armament?

Ch. W Medes
H e cause to know their arm by its deeds.

At. Are they great archers then?

Ch. Princess, not so
'Tis not the arrow's point th sinews bow
That makes them to be feared stand they or
charge
They are close fi hters w th the pear and targe.

A. What more of mark? Have they much wealth
laid by?

Ch. A ein f sil er is their treasury

A. Who s the ruler of th peopl ? Who
Lord f their levies and their re enue?

Ch. Subjects they are not unto any man
They say sla e" sorts n t with "Athenian."

At. Ha e they no ma ter Th less likely they
T tand their ground against invaders.

Ch. Nay
Darius armament th kin less folk
For all ts splendour and its numbers broke

The land that gave them birth
Asia their nursing mother mourns
And day succeeds to day
And wives and little ones lose heart
Sighing the time away

I grant you that our royal host
The wallèd city s scourge
Hath long since reached the neighbour coast
That frowns across the surge
Hath roped with moorèd rafts the strait
Their path the heaving deck
At Athamantid Helle s Gate
Upon the sea s proud neck
Bolting a yoke from strand to strand
And Asia s hordes I grant
Outnumber the uncounted sand
Our king is valiant
He shepherdeth a mighty flock
God s benison therewith
Till iron arms all Hellas lock
Port isle and pass and frith
And at his word leap captains bold
Ready to do or die
Being himself of the race of gold
Equal with God most high
The dragon light of his black eyes
Darts awe as to express
The lord of mighty argosies
And minions numberless
So seated in his Syrian car
He leads gainst spear and pike
His sagittaries death from far
Their wounding arrows strike
Meseemeth none of mortal birth
That tide of men dare brave
A sea that delugeth the earth
A vast resistless wave
No! Persia s matchless millions
No human power can quell
Such native valour arms her sons
Such might incomparable!
For Fate from immemorial age
Chose out her sons for power
Bade them victorious war to wage
And breach the bastioned tower
In chivalry to take delight
Where clashing squadrons close
Kingdoms and polities the might
Of their strong arm o erthrows
They gaze on ocean lawns that leap
With bickering billows gray
Swept by fierce winds their myriads sweep
Ocean s immense highway
Where leashed with cables fibre fine
Their buoyant galleys bridge
The rough waves of the sundering brine
From ridge to crested ridge
And yet what man of woman born
Outwits the guile of God?
The pit He digs what foot may scorn
Though *with all lightness* shod?

For ruin first with laughing face
Lures man into the net
Whence never wight of mortal race
Leapt free and scatheless yet

These are the thoughts that fret and fray
The sable garment of my soul
Shall Persia s host sing Wellaway
With universal shout of dole
Shall Susa hear of manhood shorn?
Shall this imperial city mourn?

Yea and shall Kissia s castle keep
With answering note of grief reply?
Shall huddled women wail and weep
Bearing the burthen to that cry
While torn in rents their raiment falls
And tattered hang their costly shawls?

Not one is left all they that drive
Or ride proud steeds all footmen stout
Like swarming bees that quit the hive
With him that leads the dance went out
Shackling two shores across the sea
They thrust a floating promontory

But beds are wet with many a tear
Where late the longed for love lay warm
New luxury of grief is dear
To our fair Persians some mailed form
She kissed Goodbye her love her own
Each misses left in wedlock lone

Men of Persia here in council seated round this
ancient roof
Sounding deep for sore the need is let us put it to
the proof
How it fareth with King Xerxes great Darius
golden heir
Lord of lieges mighty dynast who made Persia
rich and fair
Whether conquest wingeth onward with the
drawing of the bow
Or the ashen hafted spear head crowns with victory
the foe
But behold a light that shineth with august and
godlike rays
Royal Mother of King Xerxes regnant Queen of
my young days
Rapidly her chariot rolleth in the dust I lay me
prone
Homage love and loyal duty proffer we in unison

Enter the ATOSSA

Queen Dowager of Persian dames deep veiled
Mother of Xerxes and Darius wife
Spouse of a god and not less justly hailed
As to one godlike authoress of life
Unless the power that prospered us of yore
Now with our armies goeth out no more!

Atossa Therefore am I come forth into the day
From golden courts and that one chamber fair

With numbers to decide, be well assured
Victory had crowned the fleet of Barbary!
The whole Hellenic na y was no more
Than ten d sons of th ree sail apiece
And b t a tithe of th m in the fightin line!
Xerxes, it is a point within my knowledge
Went into acti n with a thousand sail
T o hundred ships and seven of high peed
Is the reputed reckoning Accuse us not
That in this fight we failed to play the man
A God it was wh broke our power weighed down
Th judgment scal with no impa tial hand
There are divin ties that keep the realm
Of di ine Pallas safe
At Is Athens safe?
I n t the city sacked?
Me Ay but her men!
Th y li e, and therefore her def nce is sure.
A Tell me how first the fleets encount red who
Began the atta k, the Hellenes or my son
Exulting in the number of hi ships?
Me Princess, the first beginner of all the woes
That aft rwards ensued though whence he came
None knoweth was some g nius of wrath
Some w ked spirit such as lures m n on
To their destructio The came a man
A H ll ne, from the Ath nian host nd he
On this wise pake unto Xerxes, thy son—
If there shall come d sk and d rksome night
Th H llenes will ot tarr leaping down
Upon their rowers ben hes they will pull
For safety hither thither scatterin
In secret fli ht. And hen thy son heard that
H instantly—pe eiving n t th guile
Of th H llen nor the spite f jealous Gods—
Mad known t all th captains of his ships
That h the burni g sun hould cease to beam
Across th world nd glimmerin twili ht took
Th ourt nd urtilage of ser air
Th main armada must disperse and form
Three squadron li e breast blocking the exits
And narrow channels wh re the salt wa es churn
Th esidue t compass Aj x Isle
Then if the Hellenes turned to flee f om doom
By pr ily withdrawing in the d k
N t on ould get away b t their whole fleet
Must fall nto our hands. So pak the ki g
In sa guin mood w th t th lea t surmise
Of the di ine purpose presently f lfilled
And not at all a y disa
B t ith disc plined obed n e
Th mad their dinne ead e e seama
Lashi g his oa -sha k t th well tu ed th l
And hen th sun wa ed dim and ght cam on,
Each ma ter oarsman went board his ship
And ev ry captai f th fightin crews,
And down th long li es of those ships f war
Squad on to squadron spak nght ch erily
Haili g ea h ther n t a ship of th m
Lost her llotted station nd all n ht
Th captains kept them ru ni g t and fro.
And ht passed, nd the Hellenic armament
Made no attempt to steal away unseen
But when with her wh ite h rses day shone fair
And overspr ead the broad and ample earth,
There rose and rang from the Hellenic host
A roar of voices musical with psalms
A d loudly from the isla d precipices
Echo ga e back an answering cheer Thereat
Se ing their judgment grie ou ly at fault
Fear fell n the barbarians. Not for fli ght
D d th e Hellenes then chant that inspir ng hymn
But resolutely going into battle
Whereto the trumpet set all hearts on fire
The word was given and instantaneously
O rs smote the roar g wave es in unison
And churned the foam up Soon their whole fleet appeared
The port division thrown out like a horn
In prec se order then the main of them
Put out again t us. We could plainly hear
The thunder of th r sh outing as they came
Forth, sons f Hellas! free your land and free
Your ch ldren and your wives, the nati e seats
Of God your fathers worshipped and their gra es.
Th s s a bout that hazards all ye ha e
And verily from us in the Pers n ton ue
There rose an answering roar the long suspense
Wa ended In an instant ship smote sh p
With thrust of armoured prow Th first to ram
Was a G eek that mpact carried clean away
A tall Phoenician s poop Then all came on
Each steering forth r ht for a ship of ours.
At first the e counters g tide f Persians held
But caught in the narrows, crowded without sea room
N ne could h lp oth r nay th y fell board
Their own sh ps crashi g in with beak of bronze
T ll all their oars wer smashed B t the Hellenes
Rowed round and round and with sU seaman h p
Stru k where they chose Many of ours capsized
Until th very sea was hid from sight
Choked up w th dr fting wreckage and drowning men
The beaches and low rocks were stacked with co pses
The few ba bari vessels till afloat
Fouli g each other fled in headlo g out
But they with b ken oars and splintered oars
Beat us lik tunn es t a draught of fish
Yea smote m n s backs asunde and all the hile
Shr eking and wailing hushed the ocean su ge
Till n ght looked down and th y were rapt way
B t, truly if I should d scou se the length
Of ten lo g days I could n t sum our woes.
Th ere never yet twixt sunrise and sunset
P rished so vast a multitude f men
At Woe! woe! An ocean of calamity
H th broke on Persia and all Barbary
M B t this i n t the half. A gri f ensued
So heavy its forerunner kicks the beam.
At Oh, can misfortune come in hatefuller shape?
What spite of malice adverse t our host
Sweeps through some more immeasurable are

And utterly destroyed
At There s matter here
For anxious questionings not without fear
For all whose sons went up gainst Athens
Ch Thou
O Queen if that I err not shalt even now
Hear the authentic story Here is a man
Able to tell us how the Persians ran
In this momentous race and whether good
Or ill his tidings he brings certitude

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger Ye habitations of broad Asia
And thou O land of Persia receipt
Of affluent wealth how much and how great glory
Hath perished at a blow! Of Persian men
The flower is fall n and vaded! Woe is me!
Ill is it to be the bearer of bad tidings
And yet for hard necessity constrains
I am to cloak up nothing Persians—tell
The woeful tale to the end! All s lost the power
Of Barbary is utterly destroyed
Ch O unimagined ruin dark and drear
And fathomlessly deep!
Weep men of Persia while ye hear
And harken while ye weep!
Me Yea we have fought it to a finish—I
Thought not to see the day of my return
Ch O life! too tedious pilgrimage
To the last span outdrawn!
On fading eyes waxed dim with weary age
Was this dark day to dawn?
Me Persians the story that I have to tell
Is not a thing caught up from others lips
All ills prepared for our discomfiture
Myself was witness of yea had my share
Ch Vain vain the arrow blast
The tumult of loud war!
Vain all the missiles Asia idly cast
On Hellas fatal shore!
Me The bodies of men miserably slain
Lie heaped upon the shore of Salamis
And glut full many a creek and cove thereby
Ch The bodies of the men that died
The breakers buffet the billows beat!
Tinct with the azure of the sea salt tide
Rolled with the wreckage of a shattered
fleet!
Me There was no help in arrow or in bow!
Our whole fleet foundered when their warships
rammed
Ch Howl! Cry aloud! Call down upon the foe
Ages of anguish and inexorable woe!
All evil that their hearts devised they wrought!
Mourn for the mighty host that they have brought
to nought!
Me O Salamis! thou execrable name!
Athens! My spirit mourns remembering thee!
Ch Athens! for ever hateful to thy foes!
Written in memory s book for thee the record glows
The long long roll past count of them that mourn
In every Persian home husbandless and forlorn!
At I have kept silence long calamity
Hath struck me dumb for this surpassing grief
May not be told and stops the mouth of question
But men must bear the troubles Heaven sends.
Compose thyself then and this dire disaster
Much as thou mournest it fully unfold
Who hath not fallen? And whom must we lament
Among the leaders of the people? Who
Of titled and of sceptred rank hath left
A gap among our noblest by his death?
Me Xerxes himself is among the living he
Beholds the light of day
At A light indeed
To me and all my house! A glad day break
After black mirk of night
Me But Artembares
Chief of ten thousand horse is brayed and beat
All up and down the sharp Silenian shore
And Dadakas the Chiliarch struck by a spear
Dropped like an airy diver in the sea
And Tenagon most noble Tenagon
True Bactrian to the core is a wanderer now
Round Ajax wave washed ocean echoing isle
Lilaeus Arsames and Argéstes
Fell fighting and are ground against the rocks
That gird the steep holm where the ring-doves
breed
And Arcteus neighbour once of inland streams,
Founts of Egyptian Nilus and Adeues
Yea and Pharnuchus weighted with the load
Of ponderous armour—three from out one ship—
Plunged overboard The Chrysian Matallus
Lord of ten thousand fighting men went down
And he who marshalled thirty thousand horse
All black his dark flame coloured bushy beard
Dyed gules in his own gore The Arabian
Magus and Artames the Bactrian
Far from the rough stern land he chose for home
Perished in those disastrous seas There sank
Amistris and Amphistreus cast away
His spear And Ariomardus good as brave
To the great grief of Sardis met his death
And Seisames the Mysian is slain
And Tharubis of five times fifty ships
Grand Admiral—he was Lernaean born
And beautiful withal—is lost Alack!
He gave his life in an unlucky cause
The bravest of the brave Syennesis
Generalissimo of the Cilicians
A man whose splendid valour cost more blood
To the enemy than any single foe
Died gloriously Thus much have I told
Touching the captains of the host And now
Some few disasters where they came in crowds,
I will relate
At This is the very crown
And summit of all sorrow For proud Persia
Direst humiliation shriek on shriek
Shall follow on thy news But retrace thy steps
Tell me how many sail the Hellenes had
That they dared close upon the Persian power
And ram us ship for ship
Me Ah had it lain

With numbers to decide, be well assured
Victory had crowned the fleet of Barbary!
The whole Hellenic navy was no more
Than ten divisions of thirty sail apiece,
And but a tithe of them in the fighting line!
Xerxes, it is a point within my knowledge,
Went into action with a thousand sail,
Two hundred ships and seven of high speed
By the reputed reckoning. Accuse us not
That in this fight we failed to play the man.
A God it was who broke our power, weighed down
The judgement scale with no impartial hand.
There are divinities that keep the realm
Of divine Pallas safe.
At. Is Athens safe?
Is not the city sacked?
Me. Ay, but her menfolk
They live, and therefore her defence is sure.
At. Tell me how first the fleets encountered; who
Began the attack, the Hellenes or my son
Exulting in the number of his ships?
Me. Princess, the first beginner of all the woes
That afterwards ensued, though whence he came
None knoweth, was some genius of wrath,
Some wicked spirit such as lures men on
To their destruction. There came a man,
A Hellene, from the Athenian host, and he
On this wise spake unto Xerxes, thy son—
'If there shall come a dusk and darksome night
The Hellenes will not tarry, leaping down
Upon their rowers' benches they will pull
For safety hither, thither scattering,
In secret flight.' And when thy son heard that
He instantly—perceiving not the guile
Of the Hellene, nor the spite of jealous Gods—
Made known to all the captains of his ships
That when the burning sun should cease to beam
Across the world and glimmering twilight took
The court and curtilage of serene air
The main armada must disperse and form
Three squadrons line abreast, blocking the exits
And narrow channels where the salt waves churn,
The rest to encompass Ajax' Isle.
Then if the Hellenes turned to flee from doom
By prudent withdrawing in the dark
Not one could get away, but their whole fleet
Must fall into our hands. So spake the king
In sanguine mood, with no thought of the future
Of the divine purpose, presently fulfilled.
And yet all went in disarray
But with discipline ordered
They made their dinner ready: every seaman
Lashing his oar thank to the well-turned thole.
And when the sun waned dim and night came on
Each master oarsman went aboard his ship
And every captain of the fighting crews,
And down the long lines of those ships of war
Squadron to squadron spake right cheerily.
Hailing each other, not a ship of them
Lost her allotted station, and all night
The captains kept them cruising to and fro.
And night passed, and the Hellenic armament

Made no attempt to steal away unseen.
But when with her white horses day shone fair
And overspread the broad and ample earth,
There rose and rang from the Hellenic host
A roar of voices musical with psalms,
And loudly from the island precipices
Echo gave back an answering cheer. Thereat,
Seeing their judgment grievously at fault,
Fear fell on the barbarians. Not for flight
Did the Hellenes then chant that inspiring hymn,
But resolutely going in to battle
Whereto the trumpet set all hearts on fire.
The word was given, and instantaneously
Oars smote the roaring waves in unison
And churned the foam up. Soon their whole fleet
appeared.
The port division thrown out like a horn
In precise order, then the main of them
Put out against us. We could plainly hear
The thunder of their shouting as they came:
'Forth, sons of Hellas! free your land, and free
Your children and your wives, the native seats
Of Gods your fathers worshipped and their graves.
This is a bout that hazards all ye have.'
And verily from us in the Persian tongue
There rose an answering roar; the long suspense
Was ended. In an instant ship smote ship
With thrust of armoured prow. The first to ram
Was a Greek; that impact carried clean away
A tall Phoenician's poop. Then all came on
Each steering for the ship of a ship of ours.
At first the encountering tide of Persians held
But caught in the narrows, crowded without sea
room,
None could help other, nay, they fell aboard
Their own ships, crashing in with beak of bronze
Till all their oars were smashed. But the Hellenes
Rowed round and round and with sure seamanship
Struck where they chose. Many of ours capsized
Until the very sea was hid from sight
Choked up with drifting wreckage and drowning
men.
The beaches and low rocks were stacked with
corpses.
The few barbarian vessels still afloat
Fouling each other fled in headlong rout.
But they with broken oars and splintered spars
Beat us like tunnies or a draught of fish.
They smote men's backs asunder, and all the while
Shrieking and wailing hushed the ocean surge
Till night looked down and they were rapt away.
But truly if I should discourse the length
Of ten long days I could not sum our woes.
There never yet 'twixt sunrise and sunset
Perished so vast a multitude of men.
At. Woe! woe! An ocean of calamity
Hath broken on Persia and all Barbary.
Me. But this is not the half. A grief ensued
So heavy, the forerunner kicks the beam.
At. Oh can misfortune come in what fuller shape?
What spite of malice advers to our host
Sweeps through some more unmeasurable arc

The moving finger that metes out our woes?
Me The prime of Persian manhood men who had
True greatness in their souls illustrious born
And ever among the first in the king s trust
Died miserably a most inglorious death
At Good friends was ever woman so accursed
With evil fortune? Tell me how they died
Me There is an island opposite the shores
Of Salamis a little wretched isle
With never a safe cove where ships may ride
But Pan who loves the choric dance haunts there
Footing it lightly on the wave washed strand
Thither the king despatched them with intent
That when the enemy forced to abandon ship
Sought safety on that isle they might with ease
Put all the host of Hellas to the sword
And rescue their own comrades from the salt
Sea friths But he judged ill the event For when
The Gods the glory of the sea fight gave
Unto the Hellenes armed to the teeth they sprang
Ashore and compassed the whole island round
So that they knew not where to turn And many
They battered to death with stones some they shot
dead
With arrows finally to make an end
Rushed in and finished off their butcher s work
Hacking their helpless victims limb from limb
Until not one of them was left alive
And Xerxes when he saw that depth beyond
All depths of sorrow wailed aloud For he sat
Upon a throne conspicuous to the host
On a high hill beside the open sea
There with rent robes and a heart piercing cry
Straightway he gave the signal to his troops
Drawn up upon the shore and let them go
In wild disordered flight This further stroke
Of fortune s malice fell for thee to mourn
At O wicked spirit! How did st thou beguile
Our Persians hearts! How bitter a revenge
Upon illustrious Athens was vouchsafed
To our dear son! Not all that Barbary lost
Beforetime on the field of Marathon
Sufficed! But thinking to repay in kind
All that we suffered there he hath drawn on
A deluge of immeasurable woe!
But tell me of the ships that scaped destruction
Where didst thou leave these? Hast sure news of
them?
Me The captains of the remnant hoisted sail
And ran before the wind a rabble rout
But the remainder of our army perished
In the Boeotian country some of thirst
For lack of solace of refreshing springs
We that were left taking no time to breathe
Crossed into Phocis and the Locrian land
And the Maliac gulf where the Spercheius flows
Watering a broad plain with his gracious stream
Achaia and the Thessalian cities then
Opened to us their gates but we were sore
Straitened for lack of meat And there the most
Perished of thirst and hunger for God wot
We must contend with both Anon we came
To the Magnesian country and the coasts
Of Macedonia by the Axian frith
And Bolbe s reedy marshes and the range
Pangaean—country of Edonia
And on that very night God caused a frost
Out of due season Strymon s holy stream
Was frozen over And many that heretofore
Denied the Gods thanked heaven upon their
knees
Yea bowed themselves to earth and sky And when
They had made an end of calling on the Gods
The host began to cross on the firm ice
And whoso crossed before the beams of God
Were scattered wide reached safety But anon
The round bright sun with blazing rays of fire
Made right across the stream a waterway
Thawing the midst thereof with glowing heat
And then they fell in heaps he happiest
Who soonest gasped away the breath of life
All that were left all that had won to safety
Crossed Thrace and in the teeth of fearful hardships
That desperate retreat accomplished came—
But they were few indeed—to their own home
Behold these things are merest truth but much
I leave unsaid many and grievous woes
The wrath of God hurled down upon our host
Exit MESSENGER
Ch Spirit whose dispensation is too hard
Thou hast set a heavy foot upon our necks
Ground Persia in the dust!
At My heart is sick
I mourn a vanished host! Visions of the night
How plainly ye portended woe! And you
How fondly ye interpreted my dream!
Natheless since here at least your oracle
Fails not I will go pray first to the Gods
Then I will take the sacred elements—
Offerings to earth oblations to the dead—
And come to you again Things past I know
But I would fain inquire if what s to come
Promises better fortune Lend your aid
With men of trust true counsel take I charge ye
And if our son return in the meantime
Console him and escort him to our house
Lest that on woe there follow further woe
Exit ATOSSA.

Chorus

O Zeus thou art king! There is none thee beside!
Thou hast shattered our host and humbled our pride!
Thou hast darkened with grief the light of thy day
O er Susa and Ecbatana!
They have rent their thin veils their kerchiefs
thread drawn
Our delicate mourners their wimples of lawn
They have drenched with salt tears the young wife
newly wed
Looks out for her lord but he comes not her bed
Laid soft with fair linen where love had his bliss
Standeth vacant cold sorrow their banqueter is
But they rise up an hungered though they sit long
And I too o er the fallen would utter my song

This earth, this Asia wide as east from west
Mourns—empty of her manhood dispossessed
Xerxes the King led forth his war array!
Xerxes the King hath cast his host away!
Xerxes the King (Oh King unwise!)
Steered in the wake of doom his orient argosies!
How fell it that Darius, lord of the bow
In Susa long ago,
Far fortune had That then
He who ruled Persia won the hearts of men?

The ships, the swarthy ships, with brow of gloom
And wide wings woven on the weary loom,
Landsmen and mariners haled to that far shore!
The ships, the black ships whelmed them evermore!
They struck, they split, they filled
They sank and, oh, death's throes Ionian
Vengeance willed
And now by plain and pass, rude wild and bare
In the frore Thracian air
After long wandering
Scarce scaped with life comes home our lord
the King

But they on that wild water
First-born of death and slaughter
Roam, where the long wave lash Kychrean sands
Roam, but no wave shall lift them,
Nor ebb or flood tide drift them
To this dear earth beloved above all lands.
Wide as the sky and deep
As those dark waters sweep,
Wail! let grief gnaw your heart, and wring your
hand!

Combed with no tender combing
Where ocean waves break foaming
Children of Ocean unpolluted rid
Flesh their dumb mouths, and tear
The dead men once so fair
Old eyes are wet whose tears Time long since dried
The sire weeps his lost son,
The home its goodman won
And all the woeful tale is bruited far and wide.

They pay no more tribute they bow them no more!
The word of power is spoken
But the princes of Persia their day is o'er
And the laws of the Medes are broken
Through Asia's myriad peopled land
For the staff is snapped in the King's right hand.

And a watch is not set on the free frank tongue
Yea, liberty's voice speaks loud
And the yoke is loosed from the neck that was wrung
And the back of dominion bowed
For the earth of Ajax isle is red
With the blood of Persia's noble dead!

Enter Atossa

A. Good friends, the heart that hath found
trouble knows
That when calamity is at the flood
We shake at shadows but if once the tide
Flow fair and fortune send a prospering wind,
We cannot think that it will change To me
All prayers I offer now are full of dread
And voices loud but not with victory
Sound in mine ears so fell a stroke of fortune
Dismays my soul. Therefore am I returned
Not as of late with chariots and with pomp
I bring libations due from son to sire
Meet for propitiation gifts that please
Dead bodies in their graves. Milk, white and pure,
And crystal honey cropped from bee searched
flowers,
And cool cups drawn from virgin founts and here
Pressed from wild nature's bosom this strong wine
The fecund youngling of an ancient stem
And I have oil of olive amber-clear
Sweet essence of a never fading tree
And wreathèd blossoms—children all of earth
That yieldeth every fruit Then dear my friends,
Accompany with song acceptable
These luscious draughts that soothe the silent dead
And forth from his sepulchral monument
Call up Darius spirit The cup earth drinks
I will pour out to the Gods of the underworld.

Chorus

Queen of Persia, chief in worth,
Neath the chambers of the earth
Send thy rich libations streaming
We with prayers of holy seeming
Will beseech the dead that there
They may find acceptance fair
God infernal pure and holy
Earth and Hermes, melancholy
Lord of death and gloom and night,
Send his soul up to the light
He will heal—point undismayed
Where grief's far horizons fade.

Peer of the Gods, whose kingly state
Is evermore felicity!
Shifting as the shocks of fate
Sinks and soars our endless cry
Uttered in an ancient tongue
Hearest thou the shades among?

All ye gods of souls earth bound
Hearken! Earth break up thy sod!
Grant us sight from thy dark ground
Of Susa's son and Persia's god!
To such no ample spirit
Persian earth gave sepulchre.

Dear was the man dear is his burial mound!
A power sleeps here whose influence shall not fade!
Oh where he sits sole King among Kings discrowned
Aidoneus, dim Aidoneus, speed Darius shade!

In wantonness of heart he never made war
Nor lost a world wasting the lives of men

They hailed him their God given counsellor
God given he was and great was Persia s glory then

Old majesty! Great Padishah!
Come forth and from thy barrow high
Show the white plume of thy tiar
Thy buskin dipped in crocus dye!
Unclouded spirit morning clear
King—Sire—Darius! reappear!

Griefs thy glory never knew
Lord of our Lord thy coming stay
A mist hath fallen of Stygian hue
Persia s youth is cast away!
Unclouded spirit morning clear
King—Sire—Darius! reappear!

Thou whose passing nations wept
Wherefore hath ambition swept
Worlds that thou didst hold in fee
Empire awe and admiralty
In one headlong ruin borne?
Ships perfidious ships foresworn
Crewless oarless scallop-scaled
Ye your pride to Hellas vailed
Hidden from the sight of suns
That gild her golden galleons!

The Ghost of DARIUS *ascends from his tomb*

Darius Trusty and well beloved! Comrades of mine
When we were young together now most grave
Signors of Persia what afflicts the realm?
Earth groans and jars and frets with fevered pulse
I see my consort standing by my tomb
And verily I am afraid Withal
The cup of kind remembrance poured in prayer
I have received And ye make lamentation
Beside my sepulchre in such shrill key
As calls up spirits yea with piteous cries
Summon me from my grave and way leave thence
Is hard to come by for the infernal Gods
Love better to hold fast than to let go
Nevertheless with them have I prevailed
And ye behold me! Haste! my time is short
And I would not offend What aileth Persia?
What strange what heavy stroke hath smitten her?

Ch I dare not meet thy gaze I fear
To speak what must offend thine ear
With veiled eyes I bow me prone
As at the footstool of thy throne!

Da Know that by strong persuasion of thy grief
I am ascended from the shades Be brief
Put awe and forms of courtly speech away
And utter boldly all thou hast to say

Ch Thou askest speech of me and I
Fear to do that courtesy
At thy bidding to impart
Tidings which must grieve thy heart

Da Since thine old awe is not to be enforced
Good Queen dear partner death alone divorced
From spousal joys though thee the touch of age
Hath changed to outward view this grief assuage
These sobs and tears give o er take courage then
To speak but one clear word to me for men
Cast in the mould of frail humanity
Are heirs to all its ills by land and sea
Evils a many are reserved for man
If that Time lengthen out his little span

At O of mankind the happiest by far
While thou didst yet behold the day s bright star
How enviable in thy life wast thou!
How like a god thy days were passed! And now
I envy thee in death yea count it bliss
Not to have lived to search the black abyss
The bottomless pit of sorrow Dear my lord
Darius to sum all in one brief word
Persia lies waste—a kingdom desolate!

Da Speak st thou of plague and famine! Or is the state
By rancour of domestic faction rent?

At Nothing of this her mighty armament
Hath suffered ruin round the Athenian coast

Da Tell me what son of mine led forth our host?

At Impetuous Xerxes and to fill his train
Emptied of manhood Asia s vasty plain

Da And on this rash attempt of folly born
Went he by land or sea?

At With either horn
Broadening the thrust of his battle front he planned
A double enterprise by sea and land

Da How found he means o er all the realms that lie
Twixt us and Hellas plains and mountains high
To launch on foot an armament so vast?

At A yoke on Helle s stormy frith he cast
And made a causeway through the unruly sea

Da A giant s toil to shut with lock and key
The wrathful Bosphorus!

At The thing was done!
Methinks an unseen power helped our son

Da A power of might indeed to send him mad!

At Ay since the achievement evil issue had!

Da What fate hath foiled our arms that ye make moan
For fallen men?

At The fleet is overthrown
And in its ruin whelmed the host on shore

Da Then hath my people perished? Hath grim war
Ta en toll of all?

At Yea Susa lieth bare
And mourns her perished youth her manhood fair

Da Oh the lost levies! Oh the bright array
Of proud confederate peoples!

At Bactria
Through all her clans and Egypt s commonalty
For children lost lift up a bitter cry

Da Calamitous adventurer! thine emprise
Hath drained the very sap of thine allies!

At Xerxes a lonely man that few attend
They say——

Da What say they? Draws he to an end
Of his long march? And hath he haply found
Some place of safety?

At Yea the stormy sound

And the long brid that spans the sunders sea
Which when he hailed a happy man wa he!
Da So, he hath crossed the strait and t uched the strand
And journeys delicatel throu h the land
Of Asa—or thou hast heard things false and smooth?
A Non challer eth these tidings they re clear truth
And beyond ca al.
Da Ah, with how swift stride
Hath com fulfilment of th s prophesied!
How on my son hath Zeus in n er sent
The end for told wh h my fears d d pre ent!
For lon a o I knew th Gods would speed
Th fi al consummation of that red
And when man shod with hast and girt with pride
Beckons his own doom, God is on his side
And now m things, to all men of good will
The fount hes bare whence flowed this broadening ill
B t the event m son too rashl wrou ht
In th b nd romance f childish thou ht
H dreamed that h could chain s men chain sla es,
Th holy haste of Hellespontin wa es,
God flowing Bosphorus n ther measure
Presumed to teach its b llows t his pleasure
Bound them in linked f tters hammered fast
Yea, mad high wa where hi my passed.
A mortal ma on ll th God that be
He entured war t e lordship of the sea,
Poseidon s realm (h judged so much amiss)
Challenged and thou ht t quell. And was n t this
The ery madness of mind diseased?
Proper ty and power and wealth, hich eased
The h et of men, m lo g e reign rich reward
I pl under now for some freebooter sword!
At All this impetuous Xerxes, over ruled
By evil men, in their rash counsel schooled
Learned for they taught him that th alour won
Great p ssess nd wide dominion
For th succ edin heirs nd twas ct t
Of theirs that h home was valiant,
B t with new wealth no wise increased thy tore
And so d traction I repeated bore
Ill fruit t doom th ead est wa h went
And gainst H Las launched his armament
D And in al truth th thin that he hath dun
I great in onseq ence, in memory
Never t be forgotten such fal
From power and glory such grievous loss
Ne er yet mad Susa empty since th day
When first Kin Zeus assigned her pride of place,
Centrein in on man dominion
Over all Asia rich in fl ece nd flock,
Th tall of Empire stead in his hand.
It was Med his mastered first her host
His son completed that which he began,
For wisdom had her hand on th helm
And ca tion tempered daring. Third from him
Reigned Cyrus, blest in all h undertook.
H w h al friend powers established peace
On firm foundat ons. H s arm wa stretched
O er th e land of Lydia and h
M de Phry ia asal all Ionia
He dra e before him w th the rein of po r
Ne ther pro oked h God to jealous wrath
So amiab e and gracious were hi wa s.
And C ru fourth son s t the host in order
But the fifth Mardus, rei ri in h s tead
Brou ht upon fatherland and mona ch
Shame and reproach And him by s btle craft
Artaphr nes, an honourable man
Slew in th palace powerf lly helped
B friends resol ed upon th deed. And cha ce
Placed on my head the crown I co eted.
And w th g eat armies I wa ed many wars,
But ne er in such calam t o ed
The realm nd now Xerxes, my son because
His thou hts re a youn man s thoughts,
remembers n t
My precepts for I call ye al to witness,
Friends and coe als, not a man of us
Had e er b misuse of so much power
Made it the instrument of so great a woe
Ch. O kin Darius whither tends the scope
Of thy d scourse? What may we thence conclude?
How may th land of Persia best emerge
From these sore trials and yet see good days?
Da W ge no more wars gainst Hellas, wa e no more!
Not thou h the Medic power were mi htier yet
For erth her soil is her ally
Ch. How sa st thou her ally? How can her soil
Tak arms for her and fi ht upon her sid ?
Da The power of numbers, be they ne er so vast
She wears away by famine.
Ch Few and choice
Shall be the muster with all manner store
Plentiful pro ded
Da The that are left
In Hellas e en now shall not escape
Nor see their homes again
Ch. What hast thou said!
D th not th armament f B bary
M h out of Europe er H lle sound?
D Few out of man if th oracles
Of Hea en by warrant of these lat events,
Gai cred nce they are ndi tdable
They d n t fail in part nor y t in part
Ar they fu filled And even wer they flawed
W th false predictions, Xerxes, in false hopes
Confidin hath abandoned t their fate
A ast array th chosen of h host
Wher th Asopus watereth th plain
And maketh fat th deep Boeotian earth
They a e cut ff and the e s eserved for them
Th culmination of their suffer es,
A just eward of prid and odless thou hts,
Because n Hellas they thou ht t no shame
To strip th n ent statues of the God
And burn their temples ea cast down the altars,
And from their firm foundations o erthrew
So that t ey li in heaps th builded fanes

Of unseen powers The evil that they did
Is in like measure meted unto them
Yea and more shall be meted deeper still
Lies the hid vein of suffering yet a little
And it shall gush forth So great shall be the carnage
A veritable offering of blood
Congealed with slaughter on Plataea s plain
The dark oblation of the Dorian spear
High as are heaped the sands their carcases
Shall be hereafter even to sons sons
A silent witness for whoso hath eyes
That proud thoughts are not for the worm called man
For pride in blossom like an ear of corn
Swells and grows ripe with ruin reaped in tears
Ye when ye see these things and think thereon
Remember Athens and remember Hellas!
Let none of you that fortune which is yours
And which God gave disdaining set your hearts
On what ye have not neither in getting more
Pour out like water vast prosperity
Zeus is a chastener of froward wills
And he correcteth with a heavy hand
Wherefore be ye instructors of your lord
And with well reasoned admonitions teach him
To have a humbler heart and cast away
The sin of pride for it offendeth God
And Xerxes dear and venerable Mother
Return to the palace bring forth fitting raiment
And go therewith to meet thy son for all
About him torn by grief in tatters hangs
The ravelment of his rich embroidered robe
Moreover comfort him with gentle words
Thee only will he hearken I go hence
Descending through the darkness of the earth
Farewell grave elders in adversity
Find out the soul s true solace day by day
Where dead men lie wealth nothing profiteth

The SHADE *of* DARIUS *descends into the tomb*

Ch Griefs many woes that Barbary now endures
And shall endure hereafter wring my heart

At O Fate how endless is the train of sorrow
That entereth my soul! But there s no pang
That gnaws with keener tooth than picturing
My son his royal person clothed with shame
And trappings of dishonour I will hence
And take me handsome robes and make essay
To meet him In the hour of evil fortune
We ll not be false to all we hold most dear

Exit ATOSSA

Chorus

All of earth s fullness was ours all the spacious
Amplitude life yields or law can uphold
When the unvanquished the griefless all gracious
Godlike Darius ruled Persia of old

Glory of conquest and gift of good order
His statutes bestowed and our armies achieved
Joyous and fresh they came back to our border
In strength unexhausted with triumph received

What commonwealths he captive took
And never once his home forsook
Nor Halys river passed
Daughters of Acheloan race
Where thunder on the shores of Thrace
Strymonian billows vast

Beyond the marshes stretched his power
The shadow of a fenced tower
Flung wide o er Helle s path
It fell on cities fair that line
Propontis inlet lacustrine
And stormy Pontus strath

His were the surf beaten islands hard by us
Where the thrust of the land lifts the wave flung spray
Lesbos and Paros and Naxos and Chios
And Samos with oil of her olive groves gray
Myconus s earth paid toll to Darius
Tenos by Andros acknowledged his sway

Far from both shores where the waters divide us,
Clasped in the mid sea s ambient kiss
Lemnos and Icarus isle and Cnidus
Paphos Rhodes Soloe were minions of his
And thy namesake—thy parent—O thou whose waves hide us
Mother of mourning Salamis!

The portion of Javan a wise moderation
Bound to his throne by her people s decrees
Weariless then was the might of our nation
Countless the swarm of her mercenaries
But now in the day of God s sore visitation
We are tamed and chastised with the stripes of strong seas

Enter XERXES

Xerxes My fate is upon me
My star hath declined
A grief hath undone me
A doom none divined
Hath broken the sceptre of Persia as a reed that is snapped in the wind

Age thine eyes chide me
They bow down my head
My strength is denied me
My limbs are as lead
Would God I lay fallen in battle covered up out of sight with the dead!

Ch Lord of our splendour
Our goodly array
Despoiler and spender
And caster away
Of thy host God hath cut off thy lieges and darkened the light of thy day

And Persia their mother
Mourns them that fell

She, she and none other
A claimeth thee well
King Xerxes, that gorged with her children the maw d the belly of Hell!

The pride and the power of her
Thou hast b ou t l w
Count the fallen flower of h r
Lords f the bow
Reckon a my iad muster twere ten times ten thousand I trow

Sad lord of lost legions,
Sorrow on the (
Throu h Asia s wide regions
Thy welcome shall be
Lamentation and mour ing and weeping she stoopeth she boweth the knee.

Xe Wail loud! Be not dumb!
On me be your moan!
Fo I am be ome
To kingdom and throne
A plague and curse yea a burden a weariness unto my ow

Ch. O crowned desolation
Whose stripes thy land bears
A wo e salutation
She sounds n thy ears
Mariandyn s death lament hails thee the cup of thy feasting is tears.

Xe Pour forth thy sorrow!
Lon l n hall it flow!
Nor to-day or to-morrow
Suffi th thy woe
Iha e felt the fi rce chan es of f rtune the blast of God en eance I know

Ch F ught with awe f r thy fate
My w epin shall be
Whelmed neath the we ght
Of th w lt g sea
I am fain to wail fo th my lame t f r thy realm and thy h use a d for thee!

Xe Io ia s embattled m ght
Ionia s m -of war
In A es fatal mo d ght
Spu ed by the foamin oar
S pe men hips, h nour ll away
And the e was l ft the w ld wa es play
Hea d in the lo e of lo eless ni ht
O that d sastrous ho e

Ch. Woe! Woe! thrice woe!
X I q ire f m and a k ll ye e *fain to know*
Ch Wh e whe e is that g eat multitude,
Leal assals f thy th one
Pharandaces, Agabatas,
S sas and Pelagon?
Oh tell m where is Psammis?
Where is Susiskanes,
Who from Ecbatana rode forth,
And Dotamas?

Xe All these
Aboard a ship of Tyre
Perished Where cold wa es close
Abo e the wreck of lost emp re
I left them with their foes
The beaded bubbles hush and hiss,
Th st ong tide ebbs and flows,
Bruised on the beach at Salamis,
The wa es that break on Salamis
Scourge th m with b tter blows.

Ch. Woe! Woe! thrice woe! But tell me
Pharnuchus, where is he?
Ariomardus and Seualkes
Whose fi f was a king s fee?
And hast thou lost Lilæus,
Sprung from a n ble strain?
And Tharub s and Memphis,
Are they amon the slain?
Artembares, Hystaechmas,
For them my heart is fain

Xe Woe! Woe! thrice woe!
These many found one o erthrow!
Their eyes all d m with coming death
They fixed on Athens, old d luvial b rth
Of Hate inland on her detested earth
They gasped away their breath.

Ch. A P rsian of the Persians,
The ey eye of thee
Who mustered men by thousands ten
Alpist s, where s he?
The son of Batanochus,
The son of Sesamas
The son of Megabates
Parthas and Oibaras,
Art thou turned w thout them?
And will th y come no more?
And lie they there forsaken
On that disastrous shore?
Alas! what need of language?
Th trouble of thy fac
Proclaims this woe beyond all woes
To Persia sceptred race!

Xe Wring n t my heart! Rouse not again
That ns pportabl refrain
For friends ut off and comrades sla n.
Though sharp your pang and shrill your cry of d le
Th is a louder vo ce that wails w thin my soul

Ch But many many more I miss!
Xanthes of Ma dian clan
Chi fiain and An hares, who led
The valiant Arians
And Arsames and Dia xis,
Lord of the lordly steed
And Dadacas and Lythimnas,
And T lmus good t need
A g eedy fighter fell to fill
With the ed meat of war

I marvel that they follow not
Thy crimson curtained car
Xe All all have gone the darkling way
With that great host they led!
Ch All all are gone the darkling way
Down to the unmemoried dead!
Xe Forbear! This stabs me to the heart!
Ch O unseen power whoe er thou art
Thou hast hurled down a gleaming woe
Bright ruin s ghastly meteor glow!
Xe A stroke hath fallen resonant
To the last beat of time
Ch A stroke hath fallen resonant
To earth s remotest clime
Xe O strange new pang! Sharp agony!
Ch Ionia mistress of the sea
We struck under an evil star
Yea *Persia hath ill hap in war!*
Xe So great a host and all are gone!
And I am left a thing men look upon
And weep and wail!
Ch O royal Persian!
What has thou not lost?
Xe Nay behold and see
Of sumptuous superfluity
The poor remains the remnant left to me!
Ch Yea yea thou hast lost ships men gear—
Xe But worse remains all Persia s power is
here
Clapped in the compass of an arrow case!
Ch Ye gods into how little space
Is crept thy treasure still unspent!
Xe Yet in this quiver there is room enough
To hold the relics of my armament
Ch Of bag and baggage store and stuff
Artillery and equipage O King
Hast thou brought back safe home this despicable
thing?
Xe All weapons else wherewith we went arrayed
All power and every necessary aid
That armies fight with have been stripped away!
Ch Alack! the sons of Javan fly not from a fray!
Xe They take too much delight in war!
These eyes beheld a grief they looked not for
Ch Thy great armada thy long battle line
Broken——
Xe When I saw that such grief was mine
From hem to hem my robe I rent
Ch O God!
Xe Cry loud with all lament!
Yea the whole almonry of sorrow drain!
No amplest O can this large ill contain
Ch I feel a twofold yea a threefold chain
And every link a fiery pain
Constrict my heart
Xe Yea we must weep
And we must put on sackcloth but the foe
On this dark anniversary shall keep
Pastime and sport highday and holiday
Ch And all thy strength and all thy bright array—
Xe Lo! I fled naked none escorts me home—
Ch And all thy friends and comrades cast away!
The waters of calamity flow deep
They break in death and ruin and they sweep
Wrecks of the wrath of God in their tumultuous
foam
Xe Weep blood! Yea with sharp nail
The lank and hollow cheek of dotage tear
Then each man to his house
Ch Weep! Wail!
Xe Anon with me the burthen bear!
Ch Shriek for shriek and groan for groan
In miserable antiphone!
Xe Shrill forth your loud lament in unison
Xe and Ch Woe! Woe! Woe! Woe!
Ch O grief the heaviest of all
To hear my lord the King s voice wailing his
downfall!
Xe Weep on weep on for the King s sake
Thy woeful service neither stint nor spare!
Ch Eyes must be wet or hearts will break
Xe Anon with me the burthen bear
Ch Lord I am ready to obey
Xe Wail and weep with wellaway!
Ch Wellaway! And wellaway!
Xe and Ch Woe! Woe! Woe!
Ch This mingled cup is mine and thine
Foamed with the ferment of a black and bitter
wine
Xe Beat thy breast and wail
The Mysian wail!
Ch Oh wail!
Xe Spare not thy silvery hairs
Pluck out the reverend beard upon thy chin!
Ch I spare them not whom no grief spares
Xe Renew renew thy cry! Begin
With mine your voices blending
Let sorrow have no ending!
Ch Sorrow sorrow hath no ending
Xe Rend thine ample train!
Ch Behold! tis rent in twain!
Xe Touch the hair strung lute
And teach it sorrow for my power laid low!
Ch All mournful music else be dumb and mute
That shrill lament shall ever flow!
Xe To day and every morrow
Let fall the rain of sorrow
Ch To day shall have a rainy morrow
Xe Now with me the burthen bear!
Ch Woe! Woe! Woe!
Xe And whence ye came with footstep slow
And cry of wail and weeping go
Ch Woe! Woe! Woe!
Xe Through all the city let your voice be sent!
Ch Through all the city one lament
Xe Groan ye who did so delicately tread!
Ch O Persian earth I stumble on your dead!
Xe Yea yea yea!
In the oared galleys they were cast away!
Ch My groanings shall thine escort be!
I ll play thee home with such sad minstrelsy!
Exeunt

THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ETEOCLES *King of Thebes son of Oedipus*
CHORUS OF THEB N WOMEN
A ME SENGER
ANTIGO E } *Sisters f Eteocles*
IS E E }
A HERALD

Before the Ca del which rises in the ba kground crowded u th ar and statues

Eteocles Bu gh rs f Cadmu ! Seasonable peech
And pt n that th world xpects fr m him
Whose business is a kin d m go erna ce—
If hou th hi d t bulwa k of the State
At lon l wat h—h hand upon th h lm
And n t a lull from care t lat h h lids.
Fo if w p osper God shall ha e the thanks
But—if the so rs thin I w ha a
Calamit befall—one man and h
My sol elf Eteocles, shall bea h s nam
Sun to loud preludes—um rsal n te
Of wail —which I pra Zeus, whom we c laim
A erte t keep far from Cadmus T n
And the hou is ripe I en ll of you—
Wh ther p um s to com or hath gone b —
Mu t put o strength like bud th ck burgeor ng
Ea h such measur h s ge allows,
B th f r the sat ty f th ealm he God —
Lest their c unted glo es be w ped out
And f your h ld n nd th sea th—the M ther
And most dear n rse f ou o n t nocence
F sh it was, wh when t we sought
Weak t a ell rs, h hosp table door
Th k ndly soil t u larg w l-om ga e
The f l utu of ou n nage bar
And b ed us to be denize s at arms
And tru ty ta geteers in th she eed
And t this day n God s ju t equ poise
T us wa d hilt th m ng balance ha d
F I n tum thut w thin these bast ned walls,
F ou (u d Hea e) in the mai
Ou dar hath And ow thus sa th th Seer
Wh h pherd wingèd flocks n t by things bu nt
D th he but f cogitates
With d puter in art his au ur es,
B pro hecy h h s the voi of God
Di inel ta ht A f esh atta k, m e strong
Than all that e t befo e the Achaea host
G thers g bs m he inc nd eainst the town
Th refor make peed unto the battlem nt
And tow red gateways ev ers ma f u
G ded with all the panoply of a !
Man th b east works! On turret scaffoldings
Take post! And where forth from the Cit gates
The roadways run h ld on with a good heart
Nor at th s rout of t na ates be ve
Too sore d smayed fo God sha l end all well
Mo eo er I ha e despatched scouts and p es
To watch the movements of th ir host the wh ch
I am persuaded ent not out n a n
And ha ng the r report *there is no fear*
I shall be cau ht in any tickl sh sna

Ex er MESSENGER.

Messenger Eteocles! r ght valiant So erei n
Of the Cadmeans! I br ng tid ngs sure
Of happenings yonder with th rmament
Yea and these eyes have seen what I report
Kno v then Se en Men—mettlesome Captains all—
Spil ng bulls blood in shield with black h de bound—
Their un tuo s ha d d pped n that gory chrism—
Ha e taken a g eat oath—unutt rable—
By Enyo and Ph bos that drinketh blood
To r z these wall f om battl ment to base
And sack the town of Ca mus, or lse die
And leave to us our fair la l soaked with carnage.
F r a mem rial to their folk at hom
They hanged up ga lands on Adrastu car
Weeping the wh l but on their sava e l ps
R th wa their none rather the no soul
Of ire n tsol e nd red b r hard hood
P nted n them and th ir l m eyes
Gla ed A es. These a no belated news
Fo when I left them they v re set about
Ca tin of l t fo pla es at th G tes,
Agai t wh h each should mar h l company
Ther fore th nation s chosen and he best
Ar e ers *port a ser* *nt with a l speed*
By own an Arg e power of all a *ms*
App oaches t h t hand the du t is t r ed
W th tramp f t and their deep-chested steeds
Make the pla n white with drops of e eaming foam.
Now show thy seamansh p nd make all *sure*
And weathe t h t w th n o e er th blast
Of Ares *trike for* n the dry land roars
A wa e f men mo ng armam nt
These a their d spos t on us fo thee
To grappl with them quickly for the rest

My eye shall watch with sure reconnaissance
The progress of the day and thou well served
With sure intelligence of all without
Shalt take no hurt nor harm *Exit* MESSENGER

Et Harken O Zeus!
Earth and all tutelary Godheads hear!
And shall I name thee thou paternal Curse
With dark Erinys strong resentment armed?
O pluck not out this city by the roots
Nor utterly destroy it rendered up
The prize of war! with all its settled homes
Sweet with suave fluctuance of Hellenic speech!
Grant that this free earth and King Cadmus Town
May never pass beneath the yoke of slaves!
Help us! Our common caus methinks I plead
For when a happy City sees good days
Laud and great honour have the gods she worships!
Exit

The CHORUS *enter and rush up to the citadel*

Chorus

I cry with great pangs of dread! For the foe quit their camp! Yea their forces
Are loosed as a flood is loosed! and a multitude riding on horses
Runneth before and mine ear no audible tidings seeks
An airy signal flies! The dust dumb messenger speaks!
Loudly the low lying plain to their thunderous hoofbeat rings!
The sound draweth nigh! And its speed is the speed of a bird that hath wings!
It roars as waters roar down mountainous channels leaping!
Oh raise for us your battle cry! This evil onward sweeping
Turn back dear Gods! Kind Goddesses a rescue for our wall!
How the white shields of Argos gleam! How fierce this swift onfall
Of footmen doubling at the charge in glamorous armour girt!
Oh of all worshipped deities who will this woe avert?
I will make haste to cast me down before your holy feet
Ye shining shapes of old! Hail Happy Ones whose seat
Bideth the shock of times! This the ripe hour to cling
Cleaving close to your forms why waste we waymenting?
Hear ye or hear ye not the bucklers clang full loud?
Proffer we now our praye s for the garlands erstwhile vowed
For the robes we wrought on th loom with worship and delight!
I see—I hear—the brandished spear—and many there be that smite!
Wilt thou aid us Ares long in the land or wilt thou thine own betray?
Dear to thee once God golden helmed look down on thy city this day!

Hail Godheads all that guard this realm and keep her fortress free!
Draw nigh! Behold! Gainst bondage pleads a virgin company!
For loud with hissing surges by blasts of Ares sped
A wave of men with combing crest our home hath compasséd!
Nevertheless O Father Zeus who o er rulest all
Into the toils of foemen let not their quarry fall!
Round the strong place of Cadmus the Argive beaters close!
Men harry men! The hunt is up for blood of human foes!
These bridles bind no flute boys cheeks filled with soft music s breath!
They buckle bits in war steeds mouths! These pipes shrill woundy death!

As fell the lots helm shaken the pride of their great host
Seven Champions clad in spearman s mail at the Seven Ports take post!
Hail Power Zeus born that lovest battle! The city save
Dread Pallas! Hail Poseidon Lord of the horse the wave!
Smite them as men smite fishes even with thy forkéd spear!
Be for our trembling trembling souls a strong deliverer!
O Ares! of all pity to thine own kin be kind!
Be warder of the town that calls King Cadmus fame to mind!
Cypris ancestress of our race! Blood of thy blood are we!
Yet none the less as men sue Gods we turn in prayer to thee!
Be Wolf to them Wolf Slayer! With gnashing of the teeth
Requite them! Leto s Daughter thy silver bow unsheathe!
Cry cry aloud with wailing! Hera Mistress Supreme!
The chariots rattle round our walls! The grinding axles scream!
Oh gracious Artemis! Shrill shrill the note—the song of keening care!
Shook with the rush of volleying spears raves the affrighted air!

How fares it with the city? And what shall be our fate?
And whither doth God lead us? What end doth consummate?
Cry cry aloud with wailing! Thick thick in soaring flight
Bursts on our walls a hail of stones! The parapet they smite!
B nign *Apollo! In our gates the bronze bound* bucklers chide!

Queen—Power by Zeus appointed war s issue to
decide—
Who stand st above our city—Onka Invincible!
Deliver the seven gated seat where thou art
pleased to dwell!

Hearken, O Gods and Goddesses perfect in m ght
and po er!
Wardens of march nd mountain watchmen on
all and t wer!
Yield not by treachery the town that toileth with
the spear
B t faithf lly receive our prayer who with
strec hed hands draw near!
Lo ed Spir ts, who f strength to sa e move
circling to nd fro
B fo e our leaguered city your love for h r
f rthsh w!
Think of the ch blatio s upon your altars la d
And mindful of ou sacrifice and zealous s rvice—
aid!

Enter ETEOCLES

Eteocles Oh, you intol rable pack! You ha !
Will t h lp the city think y ?—Will t i pi e
A bold assura e in the belea uered troops,
To ca t you do n bef e these ant que shapes
—Ou H ly Guardians!—the to ra e and howl—
Abjects, discou ted dec ncy bhors!
Good times, or bad times, ma I never *house*
W th omankind! Th courage of a woman
Is unsubmiss e rash, n t counsellabl
And hen she s timid she an added plague
To home and fatherland! So t now!
Thanks to this h th r thith r t and fo
Coursing of scared feet th fa nt hearted fear
Like t hill tide sound n t goes,
Runs through ll orders of the Commonweal!
And—wh le the foe w thout re mo htily
Ad a taged—we o sel es w thin th gates
Work f r our own destruct on! Whoso sha es
W th w ma ki d his fo tunes, let him look
F r the like issu ! Whatsoe e h be
M n oma — som despe bl t ung
Half ay betwixt th m both—that f om henceforth
Falls most strict bedi e to m all
Th d mning pebble hall hi lot dec de
And he shall publ ly be sto ed t death!
It longeth to a man—let om kind
Keep their own counsel nd n t m ll w th ours—
T mana e mate r the wo ld o tsid
Keep within doors a d thwart not our designs!
Now—ha t thou heard? Or hast tho failed *to hear?*
Or speak I to th deaf—a gi l t that?
Ch Dear Son of Oed p s! Fear smote
My hea t b reason of th d n
Of ha ot F r th d pin,
The whirri g wheel s fl t ot !
Because of th b t by fire beg t
That p peth ha h ith b eathings hot
Of ar steeds, by the l n rein swayed
I was fraid!

Et Think ye that when she labours by the head
With panic rush from high pooped stern to prow
The seaman goes about to save his sh p?
Ch I hasted to th s ancient seat
Because in the Gods I put my trust
When at the gates with roaring gust
Rattled a hail of deadly sleet
Then was I moved by fear to pray
U to the Blessed Gods, that they
Might stretch to sh eld the town from harm
A mi hty arm
Et Pray rather that the battlemented walls
Stand proof a n nst the thrust of foeman s spear
For were not that behoveful to the Gods?
'Tis a tru saying When a cit falls
The God forsake their ancient habitations.
Ch Not in my time thou honourable Court
Of Gods forsake the city ere that day
When battl riots where her sons resort
And flames devour her take my life away!
Et Let me not hear thee call on the good Gods
When thy base heart de iseth cowardice!
Th m ther of Good Hap is Loyalty
The p o erb sa th Helpmeet of Him that Saves!
Ch Sa e it he may yet him God s power
transcends
And often out of rou h ad ersity
Cloud wrack bo e us wh re the visual ends,
Man s h lplessness God stablisheth on high
Et *These be* men s matters—blood of sacrifice,
Offerings to oracles, when deedy war
Puts a l th ngs to the test your business
I submiss silence and to b de w thin
Ch It is the Gods ho keep yet unsubdued
The land wherein we dw ll our wallèd town
Unra ged of this armèd m lt tude
Shall what w do then call their vengeance down?
Et I grudge not that to the h h hea enly race
Ye pay all h nour but lest ye corrupt
As cra ns can the manhood of th realm
Calm your wild transports this is fear s excess.
Ch The udden girding on of wa like gear
Co fused upon my startled senses came
Confounding them the mor surpr sed by fear
I sou ht this castled c ag of ancient fame
Et I cha ge ye if they tell f wounds and death
Fasten not on the tale w th frant c cries
F r human carnage is God Ares meat
Ch I hear the n hi steeds!
Et Hea I thou mu t!
Y t seem n t so disc rnibly to hear!
Ch The builded city groans as if a once
Spake from the ground! Oh we ar compassed *in*
O very side!
Et Is t not enough that I
With all resources wisdom can command
Confront these perils?
Ch Loud and louder yet!
The knocking at th gate!
Et Stifle thy cries!
Must the whole city hear thee?
Ch O ye Gods

Keep troth! Betray not to the enemy
The City ye have promised to defend!
Et Curse thee! Wilt hold thy peace—possess thy soul
In patience?
Ch O divine co-denizens
Free while ourselves are free save me from bondage!
Et Ye do enslave yourselves country and king
Ye make both thrall!
Ch O Zeus Omnipotent!
Strike the foe dead—dead—with thy bolt!
Et O Zeus!
What stuff is woman made of whom thou gav st
To man for helpmeet!
Ch Blithesome are we not
And are men merrier when kingdoms fall?
Et Thy hand upon the holy images
Speak st thou untowardly with thy tongue?
Ch My fears
Are masters and my tongue a run away
Et If I cannot command let me entreat
Come! With a good grace grant me my request
And let this quarrel have a gentle close
Ch Speak with all speed then haply thou shalt have
As speedy answer
Et Hush poor weeping wretch
Or thou wilt scare thy friends
Ch Nay I am dumb
The fate that they must suffer I can endure
Et I more approve that utterance of thine
Than all that went before but stop not there!
Away from these sequestered images
And pray to nobler purpose! Say Ye Gods
Make war upon our side! When ye have heard
The prayer I have to offer second it
With songs triumphant lusty of good cheer—
The sacrificial shout that Hellas knows—
A salutation to embolden friends
And from their souls the battle fright cast loose!
Hear then my prayer First I vow to the Gods
Custodians of polity and soil
Wardens of field and meeting place and mart
Next unto Dirce s river springs—nor less
Ismenus do I mean to honour thee—
If fair befall us and the State be saved
There shall be slaughtering of bulls the blood
Of sheep shall redden the hearth place of the Gods
Thus I confirm by pledge of solemn speech
Mine oath to them trophies and raiment vowing
I will bedeck your shrines inviolate
Yea hang the forecourts of your sanctuaries
With spoils spear rent the garments of our foes
On this wise pray ye! Thus acceptably
Approach the Gods with vows not to vain groans
Addict beast noises not articulate
Untutored transports ineffectual
For by such flights ye shall no whit the more
Flee the appointed portion I meanwhile
Will get me forth and post at the Seven Gates
To match the foe six men of might and mettle
Myself the seventh furnished in the style
Greatness approves ere rumour improvised
Inform them or with speedier argument
Extremity of need inflame their souls

The CHORUS *comes down from the Citadel on to the stage*

Chorus

Fain would I hearken fain obey
But my heart s calm slumber beat dismay
And dread have troubled sore
And care (ill neighbour I wish away)
Looks in at the open door
And the trembling flame of fear is fed
Because of the walls encompassed
As trembles the dove for her nestling s sake
For her cradled brood when the cruel snake
Creeps to their twilight bed

Hither in complete armour dight
Moveth against these towers
A multiple host and yonder light
The jagged sling stone showers
And our people are smitten from far and near
And I know not my fate but I tremble and fear
And I pray the Gods of race divine
To save the men of Cadmus line
And the city to Cadmus dear

Where to redeem your loss shall be found
In earth s wide fields more fertile ground
If ye yield this land to the foe
Where through the deep rich soil enwound
The waters of Dirce flow?
Nourisher she of man and mead
Quencher of thirst and quickener of seed
No rill more excellent in worth
Of all Poseidon Lord of Earth
Poureth or Tethys children speed
Therefore ye Gods that are our stay
Yonder without the wall
Send havoc with slaughter and casting away
Of shields when slain men fall
But dismiss not our prayers unheard disowned
Our lamentable cry entoned
Save us and win for our land renown
Then reign within the walléd town
Unshakeably enthroned!

Sorrow it were thus to send down to hell a city coeval with grandeurs of old
Captive and spoil of an enemy spear mid the crumbling of ashes her store and her gold
Sacked by the Achaean as things of no worth unregarded of Heaven sore sorrow it were
Should mother and matron and maiden and bride as a horse by the forelock be haled by the hair
With rending of raiment Loud loud is the voice of a city made empty her children s farewells—
As they go to their ruin—confused with exultings and heavy the doom that my fear foretells.

Woe for the lawless reaping of unripe corn for the rare of the bride unwed
For the far stra e home and th long long way to t tra elled with hate, she must tread!
A of truth, where dead men dwell there is more of bliss for with multiple ills
When a city is taken man ateth man he leads way captı e he spills
Blood, h thrusts in fire he anoints with defilement f smoke man home
The soul of all everenc a mad breath pollutes when Ares hath masterdom!

Tumult and roarin in all streets and wynds
The fenced bulwark fails and man to man each finds
His foe and having found
Lets dri e his spear and bears him t the ground
And blood bedabbled mothers of babes ew born
For their dead sucklings like the ewe flock bleat
B barıan hand
Kindred from kin re torn
And two shall meet
Ea h with his load or one with empty hands
Shall call pon his fellow in like case,
Neither w th less or equal satisfied
Sa n g "Since ll men f r themsel es pro ide
How shall we fare f backward i the race?

All manner store the housew fe eves distress,
Chanc f in whes t fell all earth s largesse
Foamed reckless to wast
And, ew t sorrow w th worse bonds d s raced
The oun girl sla look for conqueror s bed
A rich lord, et in lov most dest tute
Whose onl mark
Of g eatness n the la er s attribute
When fierce embra es n th lust l da k
Exact th htl ra hment his pay
And her bewailed n f find the edress
That tears let fall in da long l neliness,
W ht s all abhorred ndearm nts w pe a ay!

Semi Ch
Look wh r our spy comes Dea ones, he brings tidings
Be certain f som happenin with th host!
W th smoothest exped tion th h speed
He runneth th th s the hubbed wheel runs!
And see B th; t apt t meet his ews,
The ki g himself th Son f Oed pus!
H too, ll hast m tes out measured strid !

E er ue a d ETEOCLES
M 1b ews—e rtain—of th enem
How th lots f ll nd at which po t ea h stands.
F " Tydeus—f remost—front th Proetid G te,
Roaring b t may not pass Ismenus f ord
Th seer forbid the om ns ar ot good
The g eed T d u famisht g f r fi ht
Sends forth his o lik t enomous snake
H ssi g t noon and lasheth w th le words
The prophet Oecles son damning his lore
For cringin coward ce that shrinks from death
And jeopardy of battle while he ents
Such blasphemy he tosses his dwarf head
All overshad wed with a triple crest
H s bri ht helm s bristling mane. Beneath his shield
From its dished rondure danglin bells of bronze
A elling menace peal the broad con ex,
Bulging displays the arrogant device
Th sky in metal wrought ablaze with stars
And in the m ddle of his sh eld the moon—
Lustrous, full-orbed leader and paramount
Of all their constellation —looketh forth
The ery eye of night And like one wood
Thus in prodigious pride caparisoned
He holloas up and down the ri er ba k,
Rampant with lust of battle a a horse
All fire and fierceness pants upon the b t
What time hard held he paweth in his place
Mad f r the sound of trumpet Whom wilt thou
To him oppose? What champion safe and sure
Shall stand at Proetid Port the barriers down?
Et I am not one to tremble at a plume
'Tis not th bra e device that deals the scar
And crests and bells without the spear bite not.
A for this night that s blazoned on his shield
Th s hea en of sh ni g stars—the folly of t
Will likely pro e a night of prophecy
Fo f Death s blood darkness i l his e es,
Then f r the beare of that scutcheon proud
By h ralds law these arm are his by ri ht
And his presumptuous scutcheon damns himself!
Gainst T deus I w ll post the valia t son
Of Astacus for champion f th Gat
R ht bly born is he and one who pays
D e honour to th throne f Modest
Abhorre of th bomba t rhetoric
B ckward in baseness h hold h nour dear
Sprun from that seed of m n wh h Ares spared
A good pla t most nati e to thi soil,
Is M lanippu Ares may decide
W th hazard helm-ca t how th e ent shall speed
B t Ju tice b sure warra ty of blood
Commit to him in trust the life of her
Wh ga e him b rth to shield from thrust of foes.
Ch Just is h cause who fi hts for his land! Him may the just Gods prosper and speed!
Y t I see th pale form f our lo ed o es li bleeding and tremble f r us, their bel ved the bleed!
M M y the God grant your prayer—and prosper him!
Electra Portals fell to Capan us.
An ther Earth born h — her ht surpassing
Th last—and his proud boa t too proud f man,
H monstrously in eigh again t these walls
W th threat which may the e ent f bear to er wn!
On th w se boast th h "With or without
God s will, b m the City shall be sa ked!
Tho gh Zeu dispute my passa casting down

His lightning for a stumbling block of fire
It lets me not! He scorns your thunderbolt!
Your forked lightning he dubs noonday heat!
And for device carries a firebearer—
An unarmed man—for weapon in his hands
A blazing torch and issuing from his mouth
This golden challenge I will fire the town
Do thou despatch gainst such a champion—
But who will stand against him? Who will bide
The man with all his vaunts and never blench?
Et Gain upon gain and interest to boot!
The hearts of frenzied men are in their mouths
The tongue s the true accuser of false thoughts
When Capaneus threatens he s prepared to act
His blasphemies and when he dareth all
That tongue may dare with insane zest the man
Challenges heaven and storms the ear of Zeus
With swelling words But he shall have y wis
Fit answer when that firebearer comes
Which is the burning bolt fashioned no wise
In likeness to the warmth of noonday sun
Gainst him a man exceeding slow of speech
In spirit very fire we have set
The might of Polyphontes a strong tower
By favour of protecting Artemis
And other Gods withal Pray you proceed
Another and the gate that he hath drawn
Ch Death to the braggart! Fall thunder and stay him! ere with leaping he come and with lifting of spear
To despoil my fair home my virginal bower—robber and wrecker and ravisher!
Me Now for the next gate and the man that drew it
The third cast fell upon Eteoclus
Third from the upturned helm goodly with bronze
For him leapt forth the lot to hurl his troop
Against Neistae Portals Round and round
He reins his mares and they toss high their heads
With gleam of glancing harness—all on fire
To fall upon the Gate Their nozzles pipe
After the mode of barbarous music filled
With the breath of their proud snortings On his targe
Is no mean blazon One armed cap a pie
Climbs up a ladder planted gainst a tower
Held by the foe and means to lay all waste
In syllables forth gushing from his lips
He roars Not Ares Self shall hurl me down
Gainst him too send a trusty one to save
This land of freemen from the servile yoke
Et Here is the man to send and with him go
Such happy fortune as the Gods vouchsafe!
Not in his mouth his boast but in his arm
Megareus Creon s seed of the race earth sown
The savage greedy noise of neighing steeds
Shall not affright nor drive him from the Gates
But either he will fall and with his life
This land for her dear nurture recompense
Or deck his father s house with two fold glory
Two captives taken and that shield borne tower
So proudly counterfeited carried home
Another boaster stint me not your tale!
Ch Good luck good luck have thou who go st forth
Champion of home to me! Foul them befall!
Mouthing in madness beneath our wall
Zeus the Requiter behold them with wrath
Me Next—fourth in order—to the Gate hard by
Athena Onca comes Hippomedon
Shouting his war shout a resplendent shape
Cast in a mould of ample magnitude
His shield might almost serve for a threshing floor
And while its round he threateningly revolved
I own a shudder ran through all my frame
No despicable artist was the man
Who wrought its blazon On the disk embossed
A Typhon shooting forth his burning breath
A luminous darkness half smoke and half fire
The casing of its hollow bellied orb
Securely hammered on with knots of snakes.
I heard his great voice thunder saw his eyes
Glare horribly a frenzied votarist
He leaped God Ares reeling reveller
By him possessed mad drunk for deeds of blood!
Gainst his assault there needeth wary watch
Even now before the Gates his vaunt is loud
And swelling with the note that strikes dismay
Et Suburban Pallas—Onka Without the Walls—
Hard by the Gate wroth with his insolence
Shall keep him off—a serpent mailed and fanged
Death in its coils barred from a brood of birds
But Oenops trusty son Hyperbius
For mortal succour—matching man with man—
Shall face him All he asked was choice for service
Time and the hour should teach him where to serve
Faultless in form of fearless courage perfect
In martial trim never did Hermes cast
A luckier throw than when with happy choice
He brought the pair together for betwixt
Him and the man he meets is enmity
And in the smiting of their shields shall clash
Opposing deities For the one presents
Typhon that breathes forth fire but Father Zeus
Sits on the other moveless on his throne
And centred in his hand the bolt that burns!
And who hath yet seen Zeus discomfited?
These are the powers whose favour they invoke
We with the winners with the losers they
If Zeus be more than Typhon s match in battle!
Yea by his blazon each shall stand or fall
And Zeus displayed upon his *shield shall prove*
Zeus the strong Saviour to Hyperbius!
Ch He whose arm Zeus enemy sustains—
Monster unfriended Earth whilome bore
Whom demons and Gods and mortals abhor—
Right at the Gate he shall dash out his brains!
Me Amen to that Next in the list and fifth
In order at the Gates of Boreas
Hard by Amphion s Tomb the son of Zeus
This champion takes ground A spear he hath
Whereby he sweareth—honouring it more
Than any God—yea holding it more dear

Than eye can bear "I will ra ge Cadmus Town,
A ma re Zeus!" Thus he—a cub whose dam
Littered among th mountains, a green chit
Yet of a comely countenance withal,
Man boy or boy-man—call him what you will
The down upon his cheeks buds thick and fast
For 'tis with him the spring time of his growth—
B t of a sa age temper—in no wise
Maidenly as befits his name—he strode
His ey balls rolling, not without his boast
Af ainst to the Gates. Our infamy
On his bronze shield orbed t protect his bulk
H flashed the currish Sphinx, so ri eted
That its embossed and staring u liness
His arm convulsed to hideous counterfeit
Of li and motion. Underneath he sports
The figure of a man—a wi ht Cadmean—
As if on him to centre all our bolts!
H 'll pro e no petty trafficker in war—
Nor for barman's profit lose his travel—
Parthenopaeus, waif f Arcady!
Oh, that a rog lik this, an outlander
In Argos, one who pays his reckoning
A handsome sum for bein handsome bred,
Should hurl gainst these walls his boyish spite
And videnf l threats, I pray God brin to naught!

Et. If the same measure that they mete the Gods
B meted out to them then their bad vows
Shall hurl them far in hopeless overthrow!
But for him too, our hurl Arcadian
A knight is found no bra gart, b t his hand
Soon finds the thin to do! Actor his name,
Brother f him just chosen. No foul flood
Of deedless words will he let flow w thin
To water pale, rank weeds f coward ce
Nor will he suffer t o erpass these walls
The man who comes in guise of foe escutcheoned
With that abhorréd beast! She shall be wroth
With him that carries her when at our gates,
The too industrious hammerstroke of war
Her bulging blazon dints with rud re rsel
Nevertheless, I lea t to the Gods!
And may they pro e that I speak erity!

Ch. Th rives my heart! Ruffles my braided locks
Until ea h hair with horror stand *up stiff!*
Blasphem f unholy men that mocks
Things hol ! O ye Gods—*if—if*
Y be indeed Gods that *requ* —
Smit them! th ruin smite!

M I am ear ended Sixth there came a man
I emper most majestical, in mi ht
Excelling all—th proph t Amphiaraus.
Befor th Homoloean Gates he stood
Chasin great Tydeus with much eloquence.
"Assassin! Troubl r f the public peace!
I Argos arch preceptor of all wron !
Erin call boy! Sla hter's acolyt !
Orgin f evil counsel t th soul
Of ld Adrastus!" Then h called aloud
Th name of Polyneices—thy blood brother—
And lifti g p his eyes to Hea en, paused—
An ful pause—on that last syllable
That speaks of strife. And thus his thoughts break loose
"Doubtless, this is a deed to please the Gods—
A noble gest which they who come hereafter
Will much d l ght to tell or harken to—
To wreck thy father's kingdom and thy Gods,
Hurling upon them an invading host!
Is it in Justice name thou would st drain dry
Th fount that flowed for thee with mothers milk?
And if thou master with thy jealous sword
Thy fatherland, how will it profit thee?
I shall make fat this earth! Yea prophesy
Here in my gra e in host e ground i terred.
On then to battle! And for me—to death
Not all unhonoured!" So the prophet spake
His shield of bronze at rest. It bore no blazon
For his affections hang not on the show
Of seeming to be best but being so!
And h reaps only where the soil hath depth
The golden wisdom of well pondered thought!
My counsel is that thou despatch against him
Antagonists as wise as they re bra e
He s t be feared who reverences the Gods!

Et. This mo es me much! 'Tis the unhappy chance
That couples oft the just with many wicked!
In th aff irs of men no ill compares
W th bad associates! There springeth thence
A crop no man would harvest The fi ld of Sin
Brings forth the fruits of Death. For perad enture
One righteous man who re rences the Gods
Shall shipmate be with a ruffianly crew
And furth ring some scheme of illainy
Perish with th whole tribe by God accursed!
O n a state where cynic policy
Goes the broad way of international crime
And men forget the Gods, there shall be found
One just man, who, though he hath done no wrong
Ca ht in the snare of his compatriot's guilt
F lls, smitten w th the chastisement of Hea en
That smiteth them all! So is it now
W th the seer Oicles' son! A man most tried
Just valiant God fearin greatly endowed
With prophecy but gainst his better mind
Consorting with blasphemers, when they take
The road which to r trace is hard and long—
H , i t be the will of Zeus, shall fall
W th all his bad confederates dra ged down!
I do n t think h will so much a move
Against th Gates not that he lacks the courage
Or s at heart attaint with cowardice,
B t havin certain knowled e of the way
Th fi ht must end for him if the oracle
Of Loxias bear fruit and he is wont
To speak to purpose if he speak at ll.
Nevertheless, I make choice of a man
To send against him valiant Lasthenes
He keepeth on the tr *gers at th G te*
A jealous ward in wisdom of ripe years
But f a youthful brawn yet immature.
A man so q k of eye so sure of hand
That instant through the und fended flesh

Crashes his spear if aught that s vulnerable
Be left uncovered at the buckler s edge
Howbeit howsoe er we thrust or fend
Victory is a gift men owe to Heaven
Ch May the Gods hear our prayers for they are just
And grant them for the safety of our land
And be the invader s weapon backward thrust
Yea in his own breast with a mighty hand!
On them may Zeus his bolt let fall
Yonder without the wall!
Me Last name of all—seventh at the seventh Gate—
Thy brother! Hear what woes his prayers invoke
On thee and on this realm! He ll plant his foot
Upon our walls our land shall hear his name
Heralded the loud paean he will uplift
Yea he will seek thee out and slay thee first
Then die beside thee! Or If he fall not
But live exile for exile wrong for wrong
Measure for measure! As he drove me out
So shall he wander forth a fugitive
And for the fair fulfilment of these hopes
He invocates the Gods that knit in love
Each to his kin and all men to their home
Well named is he the Mighty One in Quarrel !
A new wrought shield he bears—the Argive buckler
Round with two fold device artificered
Hammered in gold a man completely armed
Led by a woman form of sober mien
Justice he calls her suiting to that name
Her legend I will bring home the banished man
He shall possess his land and come and go
Free of his father s house Here ends the tale
Of all their proud inventions make thy choice
Whom thou wilt send against him And as I
Will be the faithful herald of thy word
Prove thou true Captain of the Ship of State!
Exit MESSENGER
Et O house of Œdipus! *Our* house! O race
God maddened—God abominate—all tears!
Oh me! here ends —here ends my father s curse!
And yet this is no time to weep and wail
Lest sorrow s debt with usury of sorrow
Gender increase of groans! Mighty in Quarrel !
Well named! Well named! Ay we shall know anon
Where it will end that blazon—we shall know
Whether the gilded rant writ on his shield
And fraught with frenzy will fetch the bearer home!
If the maid Justice Zeus own child had been
The inspiration of his thoughts had lent
Her countenance to his deeds this might have been!
But neither when from antenatal gloom
He fled—at nurse in adolescence nor
When s beard grew thick did Justice ever own him
Or speak him fair! Nor is it credible
That in this hour when perils thicken fast
To whelm his fatherland she stands beside him!
No! Justice is Justice! She were falsely named
Succouring such a miscreant! In this faith
I go to meet him! Who hath better right?

Ay king to king and brother unto brother
Foe matched with foe! My greaves! Fetch me my greaves!
Good gear gainst javelin thrust or cast of stone!
Ch Be not belovéd—child of Œdipus—
Like unto him out of whose mouth proceeds
All wickedness! Alas! It is enough
If our Cadmeans with these Argives fight
There s water for that blood but brother murder
Is like the tettered slough that will not off
Tis spotted with the guilt that ne er grows old!
If evil come so it be free from shame
Why let it come All titles else save honour
Die when we die and sleep with us in the grave
But if to evil thou add infamy
How shall men speak it fair and call it honest?

Child what crav st thou? Let not the battle lust
Bloody with dripping spears thy ruin be!
Forth from thy soul the evil passion thrust
Or e er it mount apace and master thee!
Et Since in this power that speeds the event I feel
The insupportable blast of God s own breath
Blow wind! Fill sails! And where Cocytus tide
Heaves dark with gleams of Phoebus fiery hate
Down wind let drift the last of Laius line!
Ch This is some fierce unnatural appetite
That hungers after flesh unseethed and raw!
Famished for human victims! The loathed rite
Whose fruit is sour whose blood sins gainst the law!
Et It is my father s curse! I feel the glare
Of those hard eyes not moist with human tears!
To do things horrible they importune me!
There is a voice which cries Swift death were sweet!
Ch Hear it not child! No man shall call thee base
If on thy life there dawn a better day!
Hereafter if the Gods thy offerings grace
Will not black stoled Erinys steal away?
Et What are the Gods to me! Methinks the hour
When we regarded them is long gone by!
No offering in their eyes is of such worth
As our perdition! Why then pay them court?
Why cringe for respite from the final doom?
Ch Yield now while yet thou hast the chance! The wind
May change with time that blows so contrary
And thy bad Genius at last be kind!
But now thou battlest with a boiling sea!
Et Ay! with the yeasty waves of Œdipus
His curse! There was too much of solid sooth
In the slight fleeting visions of my dreams
They make division of my father s substance!
Ch Thou art no friend to woman yet wilt hear me?
Et If thou hast ought to say a man may do
Speak on and in few words withal!
Ch Go not
Where thou art going—to the Seventh Gate!
Et Content thee! Therefore have I filed my mind

And words are not the stuff to dull its edge.

Ch. To win is a great glory but who can
The victory win without God's acknowledgement.

Et. He who girds on his armour owes no love
To that wise saw

Ch. And yet the [illegible] faint—
To lay rash hands upon thy brother's life
And with those crimson juices stain the soul—
Wilt thou not?

Et. Sin may be thrust upon us
But when Heaven send it, who shall shun *Exit.*

Chorus

Even this end shakes me first of fear.
My heart divines a presence here,
God [illegible] Ghost yclept
Wrecker of homes, and dark adept
Of prophecy whose vastitude of ill
The hour and all hours shall [illegible] fulfil.
Thou Curse that from the doom
Of nether Hell
A Spell invoked [illegible]
Erinys, whom to first excess of wrath
Grief maddened Œdipus did summon forth,
Thou art in this strife to work his children's doom.

Ah, stranger from the far-off land—
Scyth—Chalyb—in the [illegible] hand
The lots are shaken, thine award
Is dealt with the devouring sword
Whose [illegible] make partition cold
Of all the goodly gear men get and hold.
With them so shall it be,
Those next of kin
In blood and spirit and sin.
Of all their father's famous fields underspread
They shall at last be disinherited,
Lord of so much earth as dead men have in fee.

When children, by one sire begot,
To whom one woeful womb gave birth,
In mortal combat meet and die
And that bright pool wherein they lie
Drink both the dust of thirsty earth
Is curdled to a darker clot,
What power of prayer shall purify
What water wash away the stain
But ah, what drops incarnadine
The new the old, the mingled wine,
That Laius' house must drain

From springs of old transgression flow
The griefs, the sorrow yet to follow
Not yet, not yet is vengeance spent,
Soon, soon had the chastisement
Of him who hearkened not Apollo—
Laius, first parent of this woe.
Three sacred embassies he sent
And thrice where Delphic rocks are piled,
Of earth's vast wheel the massy nave,
The priestess cried If thou would'st save
Thy kingdom, get no child.

But Love was master he begot
Death for himself and shame
The son that slew him, witting not—
King Œdipus his name,
Who raced the womb where he lay had
Seed of curse unborn,
Sowing the sacred field forbid
To reap in blood the corn.
Their bridal torch Erinys fed,
And madness strewed their nuptial bed.

And now as 'twere a sea of woe
That may not come to rest,
Wave follows after wave and, lo,
A third with triple crest
That breaks with roar [illegible] thunder stored
About the ship of State
Scarce wall with is the weather board
Stretched between us and Fate
And I have fears lest Cadmus' Town
Whelmed with its royal house go down!

Like an old debt unpaid is an ancient curse
And in the soul commerce
It comes to and it hath its settling day
A heavy reckoning for man to pay
When not one damned entry is passed by
From deck to keelson there is rummage then
And jettison of wealth of trading men,
Waxed fat with overmuch prosperity

This was well seen in Œdipus ill starred.
He in the Gods' regard
He stood by the fireside of him was laid
In streets and squares where men walk abroad
Or great assemblies gather in debate
Was never wight so praised what time he smote
The she fiend, gobbling down her gory throat
Comers and goers at the City's Gate.

But on his noonday broke a ghastly light
And sounded all the sorrow of his wooing,
One final grief he wrought to his undoing
With that same hand that laid his father low
And put away the eyes that gave him sight
Of his loathed offspring gotten to his woe.

And then he cursed them
(for they grudged him bread)
With bitter words of grief and anger chiding
"A day shall come a day of sharp dividing
And that carves shall carve with steel," he cried.
Now the curse falls upon his children's head
And my hushed heart awaits Erinys' stride.

Enter MESSENGER.

M. Take courage, weak ones! Mother's children all!
This free land hath escaped the yoke of slaves.
The boastings of the mighty are brought low
The ship is in still waters was ... on wave
Smote her but her stout seams have sprung no leak

Sound are her bulwarks her ports weather tight
Her champions have well-discharged their trust
Count gate by gate and six have prospered well
And for the seventh—Apollo Lord of Seven
Took that by right of his prerogative
And there he fitly stayed the Laian rage
Ch Is not the measure of her mourning full?
And must this stricken realm find room for more?
Me The realm is safe but for her princely seed—
Ch I dread so much the thing thou hast to say
I scarce attend thee what dost thou mean? Speak on!
Me If thou hast power to listen mark my words
The Sons of Œdipus—
Ch Oh Misery!
They say prophets of evil utter truth
And I am of them!
Me Indistinguishably
They have gone down into the dust
Ch So far
Fallen! Thy tale is heaviness nevertheless
Tell it to the end!
Me I tell thee they are dead
They slew each other!
Ch Ah fraternal hands!
Too near were ye in birth too near in blood
Me Yea! And their undivided destiny
Twinned them in death their evil Genius slew
them
And blotted from the world an ill starred race
Such cause we have for thankfulness and tears
The land is well at ease that twin born pair
Lords and disposers of the Commonwealth
Have made partition with the hammered steel
Tough Scyth of all their substance scot and lot
And they shall hold it indefeasibly
Quieted in possession by the grave!
There to that final resting place borne down
By the dark current of a father s curse
The realm is safe dark earth hath drunk their blood
The royal blood that like twin fountains rose
One hour of birth—one hour of combat—one
Of death—dealt mutually by fraternal hands
Exit MESSENGER

Chorus

O Sovran Zeus Protecting Powers
Who have indeed kept safe these well beloved
towers
Whether shall I rejoice
For that the city stand inviolate
Or shall I rather with a lamentable voice
Weep and bewail her leader s fate?
Ah cruel doom! Ah children dead!
Mighty in Quarrel ye have ended
Even as the name portended
Yea in your wickedness ye are perishéd

O curse of Œdipus! O malison
Dark—unrelenting—damning all his line!
Over this heart of mine
Comes creeping on
Cold Misery your chilly breath
Because when like a Thyiad in her madness
I seemed to hear
The blood that drips
Where men lie slain
Then with the voice of mourning and with
rueful lips
I sang the song of death!
O ill refrain
Glee chanted without mirth or gladness
That keeps a sorry burden to the spear

Rather the word the never wearying
Once uttered malediction of their sire
Wrought to this issue dire
Nay Laius King
Hath here his wish the course he chose
Begun in blindness and in disobeying
Toucheth its bourne
Ambitions hi h
And cares of State
Blunt not the edge of heavenly prophecy
O wailed for many woes
Past belief in hate
And past belief in fratricidal slaying
Is this a tale or is it sooth we mourn?
The bodies of ETEOCLES *and* POLYNEICES *are borne on to the Stage*

Behold! self manifest they come
They need no harbinger
A double woe a mutual doom
Care that hath slaughtered care
New sorrows from old sorrows spring
And both have here their home bringing

Ah! pilgrim ship your lofty poop
No festal garlands wreathe
The drowsy sails half idly droop
And they are dark as death
Bound where no sunny Cyclads shine
And bright Apollo hath no shrine

Waft waft her down the wind of sighs
With speed of plangent hand
Row her beyond these happy skies
Unto the sunless land
Where across Acheron voices call
And region darkness welcomes all
Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE
But dearer lips must chant their threnody
And that unhappy cause
Here to their brethren draws
A sister pair the m[illegible]l Antigone
Ismene by her si[illegible]le Tears may be sold
And raiment rent for mercenary gold
And money purchaseth the hireling s cries
These warm white breasts shall heave with
heartfelt sigh
But ere the dirge begin let us prolong
With well accordant breath
Erinys loud harsh unmelodious song
The dismal paean of the Lord of Death

Unhappy sisters, most unblest
Of all that e er held brother dear
Or bound beneath a tender breast
Th cincture n ble women wear
From feignéd grief no f rced lament I borrow
Th heart s voice speaks when I thrill forth my
sorrow

O ye perverse to counsel blind
Ye wearless woe!
Must cours e turn its hand ga nst kind
Power its own house lay l w?
And sought ye death or sought ye doom
And ruin for your house and home?

Her princely walls ye tumbled flat
In ri alry f r her
A bitt r monarchy ye gat—
The sword your peacemaker
Sceptred Erinys keeps your house,
Wreaking the wrath f Œdipus.

Oh, ill encounter! Fellowship
Of hands that hatred joins!
Th d ops that from these gashes drip
Flow from the self same loins!
Woe f r the curse w th Hea en allied
Red w th the blood f fratricide!

Oh gaping wound still bleeding fresh
O rent that ruined all
And thrusting through fraternal flesh
Struck home at h use and hall.
One b tter curse f r both yea one
Hath less or mo e of malison!

Realm wid th sound of mourning runs
Th bastioned walls mak moan
This earth that l eth her stron sons
Sends up a holl w groa
And all they peri hed t possess
Waitin ew heirs lies owne less.

Too keen their cause to p osecute,
Too jealous for just shar
And h who sol ed their b tte suit
Thi k ye that h judged fai ?
Ares that judgeth by th swo d
Small thanks hath h f r his reward!

T battle th had mad ppeal,
And battl heard their cause
That iron judge th tre ha t steel,
H th b ought them t this pause
In und turbéd tenure old
Ther fath s gra to ha e nd h ld!

Loud is my wail! My heart is rent
W th grief uthentic cry!
No glad ess l ks in this lam nt
Feigned gri f false tho ght beh l
Th fountains of my being flow
For royal men in death laid low!

How shall we praise them? Shall we say
Their own should lo e them well
Seein they wrought much in their day
Were wondrous hospitable?
When host met host the pledge was graced
They la ished all—in laying waste!

O crown of women woe begone!
Of mothers, most unblest!
Who took to hu band her own son
And suckled at her breast
Babes that in mutual slau hter bleed
Here ends that sowing—and the seed!

Yea in their seed time they were twinned
And clo e in twain by hate
They are clean gone—a stormy w nd
Hath swept them to their fate
Such peace making these brawlers have
And their conclusion is the grave.

There they forget to hate their strife
Springs to no fierce rebirth
The sundered rivers of their life
M ngle in peaceful earth
And in that dark distempered clay
Too near too near in blood are they

Alack! The alien of the sea
Keen iron fire s own child
W th b tter blows, unlo ingly
Their quarrel reco c led
Ares hath sharp division made
H heard the prayer their father prayed.

They ha e their po t onl poor poor souls!
A l ttle fath m span
Of ground illiberal f rtune doles
No more the gods gi e man
And eath them lying tark and cold
Ea th s wealth u plumbed her gems and gold.

Wail for the wreath of v ctory
That crowns their race w th woe!
W l f the Curse triumph-cry
Shrieked for their o erthrow!
Wail for th l e that broke and fled—
And found a efuge w th th dead!

The stands a trophy at the gate
Wh e b ca t to b cast they fell
The t offering of Hate
And H oc hot from hell
Th re their ill star its strength essayed
No till both sank its fury stayed!

Ant go Smiter smitten!
Ismene Slayer slain!
A Blood on thy spear!
Is On thy breast that stain!

An Weep the wrong!
Is Wail the woe!
An Make grief thy song!
Is Let thy tears flow!
An and Is Misery! Ah misery!
An Oh maddened breast!
Is Oh moaning heart!
An Wept with all tears thou art!
Is And thou of all unhappy things unhappiest!
An Slain by thine own thou liest dead!
Is Yea and this hand its own blood shed!
An So is a tale of grief twice told!
Is A double horror to behold!
An Two woes in dreadful neighbourhood!
Is They lie together mingled in their blood!
Ch O Fate! How heavy is thy hand!
How grievous are the gifts that thou dost bring!
Great shade of Œdipus who banned
His own offspring—
Offended ghost—Erinys black as hell
Surely thou art of might unconquerable!

An and Is Misery! ah misery!
An Sorrow s gifts are ill to see!
Is These back from exile thou didst bring to me!
An He fought and slew yet home is far away!
Is He won the cause but perished in the fray!
An Ill he sped—for he is fled!
Is And this poor soul is numbered with the dead!
An Bad brotherhood was this!
Is Yea and they had but little bliss!
An One sorrow! One death song!
Is Bewept with tears that weep a threefold wrong!
Ch O Fate! How heavy is thy hand!
How grievous are the gifts that thou dost bring!
Great shade of Œdipus who banned
His own offspring—
Offended ghost— *Erinys black as hell*
Surely thou art of might unconquerable!

An Now thou know st thou didst transgress!
Is Now thou own st thy wickedness!
An Back returned with murderous stride!
Is Fugitive and fratricide!
An Oh the woeful victory!
Is Oh the sorry sight to see!
An Wail the grief!
Is Weep the wrong!
An To home and country both belong!
Is Mine the woe!
An This long anguish ends even so!
Is Wretchedest of mortal kind!
An and Is Sinning with a frenzied mind!
An Where to lay them—in what grave?
Is Where most honour they may have!
An and Is Yea these children of his woe
Shall be their father s bedfellow!

Enter a HERALD

Herald Hold! Let me first discharge a duty I
Am come with mandate from the Governors
Appointed by the people of this realm
Cadmean Their high will and pleasure is
That forasmuch as good Eteocles
Was loyally affected to this land
Ye do inter him in its tender soil
Thereby acknowledging he gave his life
For love of her and hatred of her foes
And being perfect and without reproach
God ward and to the temples of his fathers
Died as became his youth in guiltlessness
Touching the said deceased Eteocles
So much I am commanded to convey
But for his brother—Polyneices—ye
Are to cast forth unburied his remains
For dogs to gnaw as a conspirator
Against the integrity of Cadmus realm
Who would have turned this kingdom upside down
Had not a God from heaven braced yonder arm
Outlawed in death is he with the same ban
Wherewith the Gods attached him when he led
An army hither to possess the land
Therefore it seemeth good that birds of the air
Shall give him burial and in dishonour
He shall have all the honour he hath earned—
No following of slaves to build his tomb
No keening note of ceremonial woe
His own kin shall deny him obsequies
This touching him is formally resolved
By the good lords that govern Cadmus Town
An Tell your good lords that I will bury him
If none will help me If it be dangerous
To bury mine own brother I am ready!
Shame have I none for this rebellion!
A mighty yearning draws me that great bond
Which binds us sprung from the same parent s loins
And makes us joint heirs of their misery
Therefore my soul make thou his griefs thine own
Though he can neither hear nor answer thee
And be a sister to the slumbering dead!
This body never hollow bellied wolf
Shall tear and rend! So let no man resolve it !
For I will scoop for him a shallow grave
Ay with these woman s hands! I ll fold my robe
And carry him in my lap and cover him!
Let no good lords resolve it otherwise!
Courage! For what I will I ll find a way!
He Tis my most strict command that thou forbear!
Flout not authority!
An And it is mine
That thou refine not on thy herald s office
He Let me say this a people long oppressed
When they win free turn savage
An Let them be
As savage as you please—he shall have his grave
He And wilt thou pay the honours of the grave
To one whom the supreme authority
Holdeth accurst?
An Alas! The Gods methinks
Have meted out to him his meed of honour

He. For grievous outrag on the commonweal!
He did most wickedly imperil her!

A. Ga e back what he rece ed! E il for e il!

H. To be reven ed pon on man his foe
H struck at all!

A. So mi ht we wr n le on!
And so should wran lin still ha e th last w rd!

H. Then I ha e don eck thine own rede and
rue it!

Exit HERALD.

Chorus

What sorrow like thin s!
And ye angry ghosts,
Blood bolte ed Erin s,
Loud, loud are our boasts!
Race wreck rs, y ur feet ha e not tarried!
Th tree root and branch lies shattered!
Th ruins of Œdipus line
W th th dust of t dead shall be scattered!
And how shall m heart incline?
On thy poor corse hall I shed no tear?
Shall I n t walk befo th b e
When thou to the gra e art carried?

Ah! ma re all pity
I am afraid!
From th wrath of the c ty
My soul shrinks disma ed!
New sorrow is her for my grie ing!
Yea! for there shall not fail thee
The meed f a mult tude s tears
Thou shalt ha many to wail thee
Lost in the w eck of th years!
And must this poor soul go w thout his moan
Sa e the death son ht si t e sing th alone?
O bitter past bel eving!

Semi-Ch. What the c ty declareth
Be done o f rborne!
Little my heart careth—
Too deeply I m rn—
Yea m sorrow their a er deep seth!
Lead on! Thou h his people d sown h m
And o proud funeral pomp he shall ha e
Togeth r our hearts hall bemoan him
Together our hand build h s gra e!
For to-day goeth by as a tal that s told
And Time metes new ce su e rev king the old
A d Ju t ce her dooms re iseth!

Semi-Ch. Go thy ways! Where my trust is
My mour n shall be!
When th st rn soul of Just ce
And man s censure agree
Shall I question or shall I upbraid her?
Nay rather my dirge shall be chanted
For him who wrought most for his land
And the city that Cadmus pla ted
Und r Hea en and Zeus mighty hand,
When she was like to be cast away
Foundered far from the li ht of day
Neath the wave of the stron in ader

Exeunt one half foll wing ANTIGONE *with the body of* POLY IC *a d th other half* ISME E *with the body f* ETEOC ES

PROMETHEUS BOUND

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Kratos	Chorus of the Oceanides
Bia	Oceanus
Hephaestus	Io
Prometheus	Hermes

Mountainous country and in the middle of a deep gorge a Rock towards which KRATOS *and* BIA *carry the gigantic form of* PROMETHEUS HEPHAESTUS *follows dejectedly with hammer nails chains etc*

Kratos Now have we journeyed to a spot of earth
Remote—the Scythian wild a waste untrod
And now Hephaestus thou must execute
The task our father laid on thee and fetter
This malefactor to the jagged rocks
In adamantine bonds infrangible
For thine own blossom of all forging fire
He stole and gave to mortals trespass grave
For which the Gods have called him to account
That he may learn to bear Zeus tyranny
And cease to play the lover of mankind
Hephaestus Kratos and Bia for ye twain the hest
Of Zeus is done with nothing lets you further
But forcibly to bind a brother God
In chains in this deep chasm raked by all storms
I have not courage yet needs must I pluck
Courage from manifest necessity
For woe worth him that slights the Father s word
O high souled son of Themis sage in counsel
With heavy heart I must make thy heart heavy
In bonds of brass not easy to be loosed
Nailing thee to this crag where no wight dwells
Nor sound of human voice nor shape of man
Shall visit thee but the sun blaze shall roast
Thy flesh thy hue flower fair shall suffer change
Welcome will Night be when with spangled robe
She hides the light of day welcome the sun
Returning to disperse the frosts of dawn
And every hour shall bring its weight of woe
To wear thy heart away for yet unborn
Is he who shall release thee from thy pain
This is thy wage for loving humankind
For being a God thou dared st the Gods ill will
Preferring to exceeding honour Man
Wherefore thy long watch shall be comfortless
Stretched on this rock never to close an eye
Or bend a knee and vainly shalt thou lift
With groanings deep and lamentable cries
Thy voice for Zeus is hard to be entreated
As new born power is ever pitiless
Kr Enough! Why palter? Why wast idle pity?
Is not the God Gods loathe hateful to thee?
Traitor to man of thy prerogative?
Hep Kindred and fellowship are dreaded names.
Kr Questionless but to slight the Father s word—
How sayest thou? Is not this fraught with more dread?
Hep Thy heart was ever hard and overbold
Kr But wailing will not ease him! Waste no pains
Where thy endeavour nothing profiteth
Hep Oh execrable work! loathed handicraft!
Kr *Why curse thy trade? For what thou hast to do*
Troth smithcraft is in no wise answerable
Hep Would that it were another s craft not mine!
Kr Why all things are a burden save to rule
Over the Gods for none is free but Zeus
Hep To that I answer not knowing it true
Kr Why then make haste to cast the chains about him
Lest glancing down on thee the Father s eye
Behold a laggard and a loiterer
Hep Here are the iron bracelets for his arms
Kr Fasten them round his arms with all thy *strength!*
Strike with thy hammer! Nail him to the rocks!
Hep Tis done! and would that it were done less well!
Kr *Harder—I say—strike harder—screw all tight*
And be not in the least particular
Remiss for unto one of his resource
Bars are but instruments of liberty
Hep This forearm s fast a shackle hard to shift
Kr Now buckle this! and handsomely! Let him learn
Sharp though he be he s a dull blade to Zeus
Hep None can find fault with this —save him it tortures
Kr Now take thine iron spike and drive it in
Until it gnaw clean through the rebel s breast
Hep Woe s me Prometheus for thy weight of woe!
Kr Still shirking? still a groaning for the foes
Of Zeus? Anon thou lt wail thine own mishap
Hep Thou seest what eyes scarce bear to look upon!
Kr I see this fellow getting his deserts!
But strap him with a belt about his ribs
Hep I do what I must do for thee—less words!

Kr Words q otha? Aye and shout em if need be
Come down nd cast a ring bolt round his legs
Hep The thing is featly d n and twas quick wo k
Kr N w with a sou d rap knock the b lt p n home!
F r heavy handed s thy task master
Hep So llainous a form lle to gue b fits
Kr Be thou the heart of wax but ch de not me
That I am gruffish stubborn and st ff w lled
Hep Oh c me away! The tackle holds h m fast
Kr Now where thou hang t insult! Plunder the Gods
For creatures f a day! To thee what gift
W ll m rtals t nde t requ te thy pain ?
The destinies were out miscalling thee
Designer a designer thou wilt need
From tr p so well contrived to twi t thee free

Exeunt

P ometheu s O divine ai ! Breezes on swift bird wings,
Yet er fount ns and of ocea wa es
Th m lt tudin s laughte ! Mother Earth!
A d th u all se ing cir le of the su
Beh ld what I a God fr m Gods endure!
Look do upon my hame
Th ruel ong that cks my frame
The grind anguish that hall wa te my stre gth
Till t m s t n thousa d year have measured out thei length!
H h th de ed these cha ns
The w thr ed pot tate who gns
Ch ef of the ch fta ns f th Blest Ah me!
The woe which s and th t w l ch y t h ll be
I il and quest on m ke of these wide skies
When hall th st r of my d l a c rie
A d y t—a d y r— ex tly I f esee
A l that hall me to pass *no ha p su prise*
Of pa h ll o rtak me what sd te rured
Bear as I can I must kn y ng the might
Of st o g Neces ty s u conquer ble
But touch ng my f tes l nce an l p e h like
A unsuppo table Fo boons best wed
On mo t l m n I am tra tened in th e bonds
I sought the fou s of fire n hollow re d
H d p dy meas l s reso r e
F r ma nd m ghty teach r f ll art,
Thi th im that I m t xpiate
Stu g b in ha n nailed eath th pen ky
Ha! Ha!
Wh t echo wh t od u float by *with no so d?*
God afted o mo t l r mingl d it in?
Comes the e n t th s s old nd th s m u tain
g r t g d
T ha s ght of r y to m nt? Or of what is he fa ?
A God b h ld n bond e and pa n
Th foe of Z a done t f d w th all
Th d t s th t f d
S bm ss e e try to th tyra t s hall

H s fault too great a love of hu mankind
Ah me! Ah me! what wafture n gh at hand
As of great b rds of prey is this I hear?
Th bright air fanned
Wh stles and shrills with rapid beat of wings.
There cometh nought but to my spi it brings
Horror and fear

The DAUG ITERS O OC ANUS d aw near in mid ai i their winged chariot

Chorus Put thou all fear a ay!
In kindness cometh this array
On w ngs of speed to mountain lone
Our re s consent not lightly won
But a fresh breeze our con oy brought
For l ud the din of iron raught
Even to our sea cav s cold recess,
And scared away the meek-eyed bashfulness
I tarried not to tie my sandal shoe
But ha te post haste through air my wingéd chariot flew
Pr Ah me! Ah me!
F ir p ogeny
That many ch lded Tethys brought to birth,
Fathered *of* O *ean old*
Whose sleepless stream is rolled
Round the vast shores f earth!
Look on me! Look upon these chains
Wherei I I ang fast hel l
On rocks high pinnacled
My dungeon an l my t wer of dole
Whe e o er the abyss my soul
Sad wa der her unwearied watch sustains!
Ch Prometheus I am gazing on thee now!
W th the cold breath of fear upon my brow
Not withou t mist of dimming tears,
While to my sight thy gia t st ture rears
Its bulk fo pined upon these sa age rocks
In shameful bond the l nkéd ad mant locks.
For now new stee smen take the helm
Olympian now with little thought
Of right on strange ne laws Zeus stabl sheth *his realm*
Brin g the m ghty ones of old to naught
Pr Oh that he had conveyed *me*
'Neath earth neath hell that s allloweth up the dead
In T tar ill mit bly vast
With adamant e t tte bound me fast—
There hi fi rce anger on m s sated
Wh re never mocki g laughter could upbraid me
Of God or a ght bes d !
But now a wretch enskied
A far s en e
All they that h te me tri *mph in my pain*
Ch Wl o of the Gods s there so pit less
That he can tr umph in thy s r l stress?
Wl o doth n r *inly groan*
W th e ery pa g of th n save Zeus alone?
But he s ev r wroth not e be be t
F m l i esolved intent
Th sons of hea n to subjug t
Nor shall h eas until h s heart be satiate,

PROMETHEUS BOUND

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KRATOS	CHORUS OF THE OCEANIDES
BIA	OCEANUS
HEPHAESTUS	IO
PROMETHEUS	HERMES

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Behold a laggard and a loiterer

Hep Here are the iron bracelets for his arms

Kr Fasten them round his arms with all thy strength!
Strike with thy hammer! Nail him to the rocks!

Hep Tis done! and would that it were done less well!

Kr Harder—I say—strike harder—screw all tight
And be not in the least particular
Remiss for unto one of his resource
Bars are but instruments of liberty

Hep This forearm s fast a shackle hard to shift

Kr Now buckle this! and handsomely! Let him learn
Sharp though he be he s a dull blade to Zeus

Hep None can find fault with this —save him it tortures

Kr Now take thine iron spike and drive it in
Until it gnaw clean through the rebel s breast

Hep Woe s me Prometheus for thy weight of woe!

Kr Still shirking? still a groaning for the foes
Of Zeus? Anon thou lt wail thine own mishap

Hep Thou seest what eyes scarce bear to look upon!

Kr I see this fellow getting his deserts!
But strap him with a belt about his ribs

Hep I do what I must do for thee—less words!

And now lament no more the ill I suffer
But come to earth and an attentive ear
Lend to the things that shall befall hereafter
Hearken, oh harken, suffer as I suffer!
Who knows, who knows, but on some scatheless head
Another's yet for the like woes reserved
The wandering doom will presently alight?

Ch. Prometheus, we have heard thy call
Not on deaf ears these wistful accents fall.
Lo! lightly leaping at thy words
I leave
And holy air the pathway of great birds,
Hither to tread this land of peak and scar
And certify myself of tidings sure
Of all thou hast endured and must endure.

Here the winged chariot of the OCEANIDES *comes to ground: their father* OCEANUS *enters riding on a monster*

Oce. Now have I traversed the unending plain
And unto thee, Prometheus, am I come,
Guiding this winged monster with no rein
Nor any bit, but mind's firm mastery.
And know that for thy griefs my heart is sore
The bond of kind, methinks, constraineth me
Nor is there any I would honour more,
Apart from kinship, than I reverence thee
And thou shalt learn that I speak verity
Mine is no smooth, false tongue: for do but show
How I can serve thee, grieved and outraged thus,
Thou never shalt say thou hast, come weal, come woe,
A friend more faithful than Oceanus.

Pr. How now? Who greets me? What? Art thou too come
To gaze upon my woes? How couldst thou leave
The stream that bears thy name, thine entresses arched
With natural rock, to visit earth that breeds
The mass of iron in her womb? Comest thou
To be spectator of my lot
And fellow sympathizer with my woes?
Behold, a thing indeed to gaze upon!
The friend of Zeus, co-stablisher of his rule,
See by this sentence with what pain I am bowed!

Oc. Prometheus, all too plainly I behold
And for the best would counsel thee, albeit
Thy brain is subtle. Learn to know thy heart,
And, as the times, so let thy manners change
For by the law of change a new God rules.
But if these bitter, savage, sharp-set words
Thou utterest, it may be though he sit throned
Far off and high above thee Zeus will hear,
And then thy present multitude of ills
Will seem the mild correction of a babe.
Rather, O thou much chastened one, refrain
Thine anger and from suffering seek release
Stale, perchance, and out-worn seem these words of mine
Nevertheless, such is the tax paid by too proud a tongue.
Such punishment, Prometheus, thy wage.
But thou, not yet brought low by suffering,
To what thou hast of ill wouldst add far worse.
Then from me while thou hast me for schoolmaster
Thou shalt not kick against the pricks, the more
That an arch-despot who no audit dreads
Rules by his own rough will. And now I leave thee,
To strive with what success I may command
For thy deliverance. Keep a quiet mind
And use not overvehemence of speech—
Knowest thou not, being exceeding wise,
A wanton, idle tongue brings chastisement?

Pr. I marvel that thou art not in my case,
Seeing with me thou didst adventure all.
And now I do entreat thee spare thyself
Thou wilt not move him: he's not easy moved.
Take heed lest thou find trouble by the way

Oc. Thou are a better counsellor to others
Than to thyself. I judge by deed, not words.
Pluck me not back when I would fain set forth.
My oath upon it Zeus will grant my prayer
And free thee from these pangs.

Pr. I tender thee
For this my thanks and ever-during praise
Certes, no backward friend art thou: and yet
Trouble not thyself, for at the best thy labour
Will nothing serve me, if thou meanest to serve.
Bein thyself untrammelled stand thou fast.
For, not to mitigate my own mischance
Would I see others hap on evil days.
Though it be far from me I feel the weight
Of Atlas' woes, my brother in the west
Shouldering the pillar that props heaven and earth,
No wieldy fardel for his arms to fold.
The giant dweller in Cilician dens
I saw and pitied—a terrific shape,
A hundred headed monster—when he fell
Resistless Typhon who withstood the Gods,
With fearsome hiss of beak mouth horrible
While lightnin' from his eyes with Gorgon-glare
Flashed forth to take the realm of Zeus.
But on him came the bolt that never sleeps,
Down-crashing thunder with emitted fire
Which shattered him and all his towering hopes
Dashed into ruin smitten through the breast
His strength is smoking cinder, lightning-charred.
And now a heap, a helpless, sprawling bulk,
He lies stretched out beside the narrow seas,
Pounded and crushed deep under Etna's roots.
But on the mountain top Hephaestus sits
Forging the molten iron when shall burst
Rivers of fire, with red and ravening jaws
To waste fair fruited smooth Sicilian fields.
Such bilious up-boiling of his ire
Shall Typhon vent with slimestone showers red hot,
And unapproachable surge of fiery spray
Although combusted by the bolt of Zeus.
But thou art not unlearned nor needest me
To be thy teacher—save thyself the ways
Thou knowest and I will fortify my heart
Until the wrathfulness of Zeus abate

Oc. Nay then, Prometheus, art thou ignorant
Words are physicians to a wrath-sick soul?

Pr. Yes, if with skill one soften the ripe core,
Not by force harsh measures make it obdurate.

Or one a way devise
To hurl him from the throne where he doth
monarchize
Pr Yea of a surety—though he do me wrong
Loading my limbs with fetters strong—
The president
Of heaven s high parliament
Shall need me yet to show
What new conspiracy with privy blow
Attempts his sceptre and his kingly seat
Neither shall words with all persuasion sweet
Not though his tongue drop honey cheat
Nor charm my knowledge from me nor duress
Of menace dire fear of more grievous pains
Unseal my lips till he have loosed these chains
And granted for these injuries redress
Ch High is the heart of thee
Thy will no whit by bitter woes unstrung
And all too free
The licence of thy bold unshackled tongue
But fear hath roused my soul with piercing cry!
And for thy fate my heart misgives me! I
Tremble to know when through the breakers roar
Thy keel shall touch again the friendly shore
For not by prayer to Zeus is access won
An unpersuadable heart hath Cronos son
Pr I know the heart of Zeus is hard that he hath
tied
Justice to his side
But he shall be full gentle thus assuaged
And the implacable wrath wherewith he raged
Smoothed quite away nor he nor I
Be loth to seal a bond of peace and amity
Ch All that thou hast to tell I pray unfold
That we may hear at large upon what count
Zeus took thee and with bitter wrong affronts
Instruct us if the telling hurt thee not
Pr These things are sorrowful for me to speak
Yet silence too is sorrow all ways woe!
When first the Blessed Ones were filled with wrath
And there arose division in their midst
These instant to hurl Cronos from his throne
That Zeus might be their king and these adverse
Contending that he ne er should rule the Gods
Then I wise counsel urging to persuade
The Titans sons of Ouranos and Chthon
Prevailed not but all indirect essays
Despising they by the strong hand effortless
Yet by main force—supposed that they might
seize
Supremacy But me my mother Themis
And Gaia one form called by many names
Not once alone with voice oracular
Had prophesied how power should be disposed—
That not by strength neither by violence
The mighty should be mastered but by guile
Which things by me set forth at large they scorned
Nor graced my motion with the least regard
Then of all ways that offered I judged best
Taking my mother with me to support
No backward friend the not less cordial Zeus
And by my politic counsel Tartarus
The bottomless and black old Cronos hides
With his confederates So helped by me
The tyrant of the Gods such service rendered
With ignominious chastisement requites
But tis a common malady of power
Tyrannical never to trust a friend
And now what ye inquired for what arraigned
He shamefully entreats me ye shall know
When first upon his high paternal throne
He took his seat forthwith to divers Gods
Divers good gifts he gave and parcelled out
His empire but of miserable men
Recked not at all rather it was his wish
To wipe out man and rear another race
And these designs none contravened but me.
I risked the bold attempt and saved mankind
From stark destruction and the road to hell
Therefore with this sore penance am I bowed
Grievous to suffer pitiful to see.
But for compassion shown to man such fate
I no wise earned rather in wrath s despite
Am I to be reformed and made a show
Of infamy to Zeus
Ch He hath a heart
Of iron hewn out of unfeeling rock
Is he Prometheus whom thy sufferings
Rouse not to wrath Would I had ne er beheld
them
For verily the sight hath wrung my heart
Pr Yea to my friends a woeful sight am I
Ch Hast not more boldly in aught else
transgressed?
Pr I took from man expectancy of death
Ch What medicine found st thou for this malady?
Pr I planted blind hope in the heart of him
Ch A mighty boon thou gavest there to man
Pr Moreover I conferred the gift of fire
Ch And have frail mortals now the flame bright
fire?
Pr Yea and shall master many arts thereby
Ch And Zeus with such misfeasance charging
thee—
Pr Torments me with extremity of woe
Ch And is no end in prospect of thy pains?
Pr None save when he shall choose to make
an end
Ch How should he choose? What hope is thine?
Dost thou
Not see that thou hast erred? But how thou erredst
Small pleasure were to me to tell to thee
Exceeding sorrow Let it go then rather
Seek thou for some deliverance from thy woes
Pr He who stands free with an untrammelled
foot
Is quick to counsel and exhort a friend
In trouble But all these things I know well
Of my free will my own free will I erred
And freely do I here acknowledge it
Freeing mankind myself have durance found
Natheless I looked not for sentence so dread
High on this precipice to droop and pine
Having no neighbour but the desolate crags

And now lament n m re the lls I suff r
B t come to earth and an attent e ear
Lend to the things th t shall befall he ereafter
Harken hharken s ffe a Is ff rl
Who kno s, wh knows b t o some scatheless head
An th s et f r the like woes reserved
The andering doo n w ll presently al ght?
Ch Pr m theus, we ha e hea d thy call
Not on deaf ears these awful acc nts fall
Lo! li htly lea in t thy words
My fl ear
And holy air the pathway of great b rds,
I lo to tread thi land of peak a d scar
And ce tify m self by t din s su e
Of ll thou hast endu ed a d must endure.

While the inged chariot of th OCEAN DES *comes to gro nd their father* OCE US *enters riding on a monster*

Oce s Now ha l tra ersed the unendin pla n
And unt th Prometheus, am I come
Guidi this n ed monst r w th n r n
Not an bit, but mind s firm ma te dom
And k ow that f thy grief my heart s sore
The bond of kind m thinks, c n straineth me
Nor is the any I would h nour mor
Apart from kin hip tha I r e en e thee
And thou shalt lea that I peak rit
Min is o smooth false tongue for do but bow
How I ca serv thee g e ed nd utra ed thus,
Thou e shalt say thou hast e me weal e me woe,
A friend more faithful than Ocea s.

Pr How ow? Who greets m What! Art thou too come
T gaze pon my woes? How could t thou lea e
Th stream that bears thy name thi antres r hed
W h natu rock, t ist ea th that b eeds
Th massy iron in her womb Com st thou
To be spectat f my all t
And f now s mpathizer w th m woes?
B hold, thi ind ed to ga pon!
The friend of Zeus co tablish r of hi rule
See by this se t w th what pai I am bowed!

Oc Prom tl eus, all too plain! I beh ld
And fo th best would cou sel thee albeit
Thy brain subtl Learn to kn w th heart
And as th times, so let th manners han
F r b th law f ha e ew God r les,
B t, f these b tt sa harp-set w d
Thou entest t may be though he sit th ed
Far ff and hi h bov there, Zeu ill hear
And th th present mult tud of ills
W ll seem th mild cor ection of babe
Rath O thou much ha tened on fra
Thin ger and from uffer g seek lease.
Stale, perad entur seem these words of mun
Nevertheless, of a too ha ght tongu
Such puni hment Prom th us, is th wa
B t thou, not et brought low b suffering
To hat thou hast f il would st ad l fa worse.
Therefore wh le thou hast me f r schoolmaster
Th u shalt n t kick against the pri k the more
That an arch-despot who no aud t dreads
Rules b his own rou h w ll And now I leave thee
To str e with what success I may command
F r thy del rance Keep a qu et m nd
And use n t o er ehemence of speech—
Knowest thou not b ing e ceeding w se
A wanton idle tongu brings chastisement?

Pr I ma el that thou art n t in my case
Seei w th me thou d d st ad ent re all
And now I d entreat thee spare thyself
Thou w lt not mo e him he s not easy mo ed
Take h ed lest thou find troubl by the way

Oc Thou ar a better counsellor to others
Tha t thyself I jud e by d eds not words.
Pluck me not back when I would fain set forth
My oath upon it Zeus w ll grant my pray r
A d free thee from these pangs

Pr I tender thee
For this my thanks and e er-duri g pra se
Certes, n backward fr en l rt thou a d yet
Trouble not thyself for at the best thy labour
Will nothing serv me f th u mean t to serve.
Bei thyself untramm lled tand thou fast.
Fo n t t mit g te my own m schance
Would I see other h p n e il days.
The th u ht be far fr m me I feel the weight
Of Atla w s, m b other in the west
Should rir the p llar that props hea en and earth,
No w elds fard l for hi arm s to fold
The giant dw ll r in Cil cian dens
I saw and pit ed—a terrific shape
A l undred headed monster—when he f ll
Resi tless Typl on who w th tood the Gods,
W th fearsome h ss of beak mouth horrible
While l htnin from h e es w th Go gon glare
Fla hed fo the ra e f the ealm of Zeus.
B t o him came the bolt that n e sleeps,
Down-crashing thu d r with em tted fire
Which hatt red him a d all his tow in hopes
Dashed i to ru n mitten thro h th b east
H t en th as sm h g e nde l ghtni g-charred
And now heap a h lpl ss, p awling hulk
He lies t et hed out bes de the narrow seas,
Pounded nd crushed de p und r Etna s oots.
But on th m unt in t p Hephaestus is
Forg n th m lt n i n whence shall burst
Ri rs f fire w th ed d ra ening jaws
To wa te fair fru ted smooth S lian fi lds.
S h b l ou p-boil g of hi ir
Shall T pho nt w th sh to how rs red hot,
And unapp oachabl sur e f fi re spray
Alth ugh ombusted b th bolt f Zeus.
B t th u art not u learned eedest me
To be thy teacher sa th self the way
Thou knowest and I will t stify my heart
U til th wrathf lness of Zeus abate

Oc N w then Prom theus, t thou gn rant
W ds physi ian to wrath-si k soul?

Pr Yes, if w th kill o e soft n the r pe core
N t by ro gh measures make t obdurate

Or one a way devise
To hurl him from the throne where he doth
monarchize
Pr Yea of a surety—though he do me wrong
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The president
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Shall need me yet to show
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Neither shall words with all persuasion sweet
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Of menace dire fear of more grievous pains
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The licence of thy bold unshackled tongue
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Tremble to know when through the breakers roar
Thy keel shall touch again the friendly shore
For not by prayer to Zeus is access won
An unpersuadable heart hath Cronos son
Pr I know the heart of Zeus is hard that he hath
tied
Justice to his side
But he shall be full gentle thus assuaged
And the implacable wrath wherewith he raged
Smoothed quite away nor he nor I
Be loth to seal a bond of peace and amity
Ch All that thou hast to tell I pray unfold
That we may hear at large upon what count
Zeus took thee and with bitter wrong affronts
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Prevailed not but all indirect essays
Despising they by the strong hand effortless
Yet by main force—supposed that they might
seize
Supremacy But me my mother Themis
And Gaia one form called by many names,
Not once alone with voice oracular
Had prophesied how power should be disposed—
That not by strength neither by violence
The mighty should be mastered but by guile
Which things by me set forth at large they scorned
Nor graced my motion with the least regard
Then of all ways that offered I judged best
Taking my mother with me to support
No backward friend the not less cordial Zeus
And by my politic counsel Tartarus
The bottomless and black old Cronos hides
With his confederates So helped by me
The tyrant of the Gods such service rendered
With ignominious chastisement requites
But tis a common malady of power
Tyrannical never to trust a friend
And now what ye inquired for what arraigned
He shamefully entreats me ye shall know
When first upon his high paternal throne
He took his seat forthwith to divers Gods
Divers good gifts he gave and parcelled out
His empire but of miserable men
Recked not at all rather it was his wish
To wipe out man and rear another race
And these designs none contravened but me.
I risked the bold attempt and saved mankind
From stark destruction and the road to hell
Therefore with this sore penance am I bowed
Grievous to suffer pitiful to see
But for compassion shown to man such fate
I no wise earned rather in wrath s despite
Am I to be reformed and made a show
Of infamy to Zeus
Ch He hath a heart
Of iron hewn out of unfeeling rock
Is he Prometheus whom thy sufferings
Rouse not to wrath Would I had ne er beheld
them
For verily the sight hath wrung my heart
Pr Yea to my friends a woeful sight am I
Ch Hast not more boldly in aught else
transgressed?
Pr I took from man expectancy of death
Ch What medicine found st thou for this malady?
Pr I planted blind hope in the heart of him
Ch A mighty boon thou gavest there to man
Pr Moreover I conferred the gift of fire
Ch And have frail mortals now the flame bright
fire?
Pr Yea and shall master many arts thereby
Ch And Zeus with such misfeasance charging
thee—
Pr Torments me with extremity of woe
Ch And is no end in prospect of thy pains?
Pr None save when he shall choose to make
an end
Ch How should he choose? What hope is thine?
Dost thou
Not see that thou hast erred? But how thou erredst
Small pleasure were to me to tell to thee
Exceeding sorrow Let it go then rather
Seek thou for some deliverance from thy woes
Pr He who stands free with an untrammelled
foot
Is quick to counsel and exhort a friend
In trouble But all these things I know well
Of my free will my own free will I erred
And freely do I here acknowledge it
Freeing mankind myself have durance found
Natheless I looked not for sentence so dread
High on this precipice to droop and pine
Having no neighbour but the desolate crags.

Nor one lament no more the ills I suffer
For me, to earth and an all [illegible] ear
Less to the times that shall befall hereafter
How [illegible] suffer as I suffer!
Who knows, who knows, but too soon [illegible] helpless
head,
Another's yet for the like woes reserved,
The [illegible] doom will presently [illegible]
Ch. Prometheus, we have heard thy call
Not on deaf ears these awful laments fall.
[illegible] at thy words
[illegible]
And [illegible] the pathway of winged birds,
[illegible] this land of peaks and scars.
And [illegible] moved by [illegible]
O [illegible] thou hast endured and must endure.
Whilst the [illegible] of the Oceanides
[illegible] ground [illegible] Oceanus enter
[illegible]
Oceanus [illegible] traversed [illegible] plain
[illegible] Prometheus, am I come.
[illegible] with no rein.
[illegible] masterdom.
[illegible] heart is sore
The bond of kind, [illegible] constraineth me
[illegible] I would honour more
[illegible] I revere thee
And [illegible] I speak [illegible]
[illegible] smooth false tongue. [illegible] show
How I can [illegible] thee, [illegible] and [illegible]
[illegible] come [illegible]
woe.
A friend more [illegible] than Oceanus.
Pr. How now? Who [illegible] me? What! Art thou
[illegible]
[illegible] How [illegible]
The [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] earth that breeds
The [illegible] Com'st thou
To be [illegible]
[illegible] woes
[illegible]
The friend of Zeus [illegible] his [illegible]
See by this sentence with what pains I am bowed!
Oc. Prometheus, all too plainly I behold
[illegible] counsel [illegible]
[illegible] Learn to know thyself
And [illegible] the times [illegible]
[illegible] God [illegible]
[illegible] word
[illegible]
[illegible] Zeus will hear
[illegible]
[illegible] correction of [illegible]
[illegible] O [illegible] chastened one, refrain
[illegible] from suffering seek release.
[illegible] these woes [illegible]
[illegible]
Such punishment, Prometheus, is the wage
[illegible]
[illegible] what thou hast of ill [illegible] worse.

Therefore while thou hast me for schoolmaster
Thou shalt no kick against the pricks, the more
That an austere despot who no audit reads
Rules by his own rough will. And now I leave thee,
To try if with what success I may command
For thy deliverance. Keep a quiet mind
And use not over [illegible] vehemence of speech—
Knowest thou not, being exceeding wise,
A wanton tongue [illegible] chastisement
Pr. I envy [illegible] that thou art not in [illegible] case
Sent [illegible] with me thou didst [illegible] venture all.
And now I do entreat thee, spare thyself.
Thou wilt not move him [illegible] not easy moved.
Take heed lest thou find trouble by the way
Oc. Thou art a better counsellor to others
Than to thyself I judge by deed, not words.
Pluck me not back when I would fain set forth.
My oath upon it Zeus will grant me [illegible]
And free thee from these pains.
Pr. *I tender thee*
For this my thanks and everduring praise
Certes, no backward friend art thou; and yet
Trouble not thyself, for at the best thy labour
Will nothing serve me if thou mean it to serve.
Bear thyself untrammelled, stand thou fast.
For no [illegible] own mischance,
Would I see others [illegible] evil days.
[illegible] be far from me! I feel the weight
Of Atlas' woes, my brother in the west
Shouldering the pillar that props heaven and earth,
No weight [illegible] for his arms to fold.
The giant [illegible] Cilician dens
I saw and pitied—a terrific shape
A hundred-headed monster—when he fell,
Restless Typhon who withstood the Gods,
With fearsome hiss of fiery mouth born!
While [illegible] from his eyes with Gorgon glare
Flashed for the [illegible] realm of Zeus.
But on him came the bolt that never sleeps,
Down-crashing thunder with emitted fire
Which shattered him and all his towering boasts
[illegible] the beast
His strength [illegible] charred.
And now a [illegible] helpless, sprawling hulk,
He lies stretched out beside the narrow seas
Pounded and pressed deep under Etna's roots
But on the mountain top Hephaestus sits
Forging the molten iron whence shall burst
Rivers of fire, with red and [illegible] jaws
To waste the fruited, smooth Sicilian fields.
Such [illegible] of his [illegible]
[illegible] shower red hot
And unapproachable [illegible] storm,
Although combusted by the bolt of Zeus.
But thou art not unlearned, nor [illegible] me
To be thy teacher [illegible] way
Thou knowest; and I will fortify my heart
Until the wrathful [illegible] of Zeus abate.
Oc. [illegible] then, Prometheus, art thou [illegible]
Words are physicians to [illegible] wrath-sick soul
Pr. Yes, if with skill one soften the ripe core,
[illegible] measures make it obdurate.

Oc Seest thou in warm affection detriment
Or aught untoward in adventuring?
Pr A load of toil and a light mind withal
Oc Then give me leave to call that sickness mine
Wise men accounted fools attain their ends
Pr But how if I am called by thine offence?
Oc There very palpably thou thrustest home
Pr Beware lest thou through pity come to broils
O With one established in Omnipotence?
Pr Of him take heed lest thou find heaviness
Oc I am schooled by thy calamity Prometheus!
Pr Pa k th n! And prithee, do not change thy
mind!
Oc Thou criest On to one in haste to go
For look my dragon with impatient wings
Flaps at the broad smooth road of level air
Fain would he kneel him down in his own stall

Exit OCEANUS

Ch (*f-r a' , k-r--*) I mourn for thee Prometheus
minished and brought low
Watering my virgin cheeks with these sad drops
that flow
From sorrow s rainy fount to fill soft lidded eyes
With pure libations for thy fortune s obsequies
An evil portion that none coveteth hath Zeus
Prepared for thee by self made laws established
for his use
Disposing all the elder Gods he purposeth to show
How strong is that right arm wherewith he smites
a foe
There hath gone up a cry from earth a groaning
for the fall
Of things of old renown and shapes majestical
And for thy passing an exceeding bitter groan
For thee and for thy brother Gods whose honour
was thine own
These things all they who dwell in Asia s holy
seat
Time s minions mourn and with their groans thy
groans repeat
Yea and they mourn who dwell beside the Colchian
shore
The hero maids unwedded that delight in war
And Scythia s swarming myriads who their dwelling
make
Around the borders of the world the salt Mæotian
lake
Mourns Ares stock that flowers in desert Araby
And the strong city mourns the hill fort planted
high
Near neighbour to huge Caucasus dread
mountaineers
That love the clash of arms the counter of sharp
spears
Beforetime of all Gods one have I seen in pain
One only Titan bound with adamantine chain
Atlas in strength supreme who groaning stoops
downbe
Under the bur nd heaven s broad
firma
Bellows th with
f

Clashing tumultuous for thee the deep seas chant
their dirge
And Hell s dark under world a hollow moaning fills
Thee mourn the sacred streams with all their
fountain rills
Pr Think not that I for pride and stubbornness
Am silent rather is my heart the prey
Of gnawing thoughts both for the past and now
Seeing myself by vengeance buffeted
For to these younger Gods their precedence
Who severally determined if not I?
No more of that I should but weary you
With things ye know but listen to the tale
Of human sufferings and how at first
Senseless as beasts I gave men sense possessed them
Of mind I speak not in contempt of man
I do but tell of good gifts I conferred
In the beginning seeing they saw amiss
And hearing heard not but like phantoms huddled
In dreams the perplexed story of their days
Confounded knowing neither timber work
Nor brick built dwellings basking in the light
But dug for themselves holes wherein like ants
That hardly may contend against a breath
They dwelt in burrows of their unsunned caves
Neither of winter s cold had they fixed sign
Nor of the spring when she comes decked with
flowers
Nor yet of summer s heat with melting fruits
Sure token but utterly without knowledge
Moiled until I the rising of the stars
Showed them and when they set though much
obscure
Moreover number the most excellent
Of all inventions I for them devised
And gave them writing that retaineth all
The serviceable mother of the Muse
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And take upon themselves to man s relief
The heaviest labour of his hands and I
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And those sea wanderers with the wings of cloth
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I perfected who out upon t have none—
No not one shift—to rid me of this shame
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mind
Strays at a loss like to a bad physician
Fallen sick thou rt out of heart nor cans t
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For thine own case the draught to make thee sound
Pr But hear the sequel and the more admire
What arts what aids I cleverly evolved
The chiefest that if any man fell sick
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They dwindled quite away until I taught them
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Wherewith they now are armed against disease

I staked the winding path of div nation
And was the first distinguisher of dreams,
The true from false and voices ominous
Of meaning da k interpreted and t kens
Seen when men take the road and augury
By flight of all the great r crook-clawed birds
With nice discrimination fu fined
These by their nature fa r and fa ourable
Those, flattered with fa r name And of each sort
The hab ts I described their mutual feuds
And fri nd hips and the assemblages they hold
And of the plumpness of the inward pa ts
What colour is ac eptable to the Gods,
Th ell treaked liver I be a d gall bladder
Also by roastin limbs well wr pped in fat
And th lo g hine I led men on the roa l
Of da k and riddl g knowledge nd I purged
The glancing ey f fire d m b fore
And made its meani g plain Th se are my works.
Then th gs be eath the ea th aids hid from man
Brass, iro silver g ld wh d res to say
He as bef re me in d sco ring?
No I t well, u less he lo es to babble.
And in a single wo d to sum th whol —
All ma r of arts me f om Promethe s learned

Ch Shoot not bey nd the ma k in su couri g man
While thou thyself t c mf rtless f r I
Am of good h pe that from these bonds escaped
Thou shalt one day b m ghti r than Ze s.

Pr F te that br ngs all things to an nd not thus
Appo tioneth my l t ten th usand pang
Must bow ten thousa d m series affl ct me
E from these bonds I freed m fir d for Art
I by m ch eaker than N cess ty

Ch Wh s th p lot f N cessity?

Pr The F tes triform nd the nfo g tting Furies.

Ch So then Zeus is of lesse might than these?

Pr S ely he hall not hun the l t apport o ed

Ch What lot fo Zeus sa e wo ld w thout nd eig ?

Pr Tax m no furth r with mpo t nate quest s.

Ch O deep th mystery thou shr udest there!

Pr Of ught b t this freel thou may t d scourse
But touching this I charge th speak o word
N y et t utterly f tr ctly kept
Th sec t f n these bonds shall t me fr e

Chor s

M y Zeus wh all th gs s veth
N er w eak th m ght non tayeth
O way ard w ll of mi
M I t tn t n wa r
W th off ri gs of w t sa our
And fea ts of a ht red kine
The h ly t th holy
W th freq ent f t and l wly
At ltar fane and sh in
O er the Ocea ma hes,
The d p that o drought parches,
Draw near to the d ine
My tongue the Gods estran e not
My firm set purpose change not
As wax m lts in fire shine
Sweet s th e life that lengthens
While joyous hope still strengthens,
And glad bright thoughts sustain
But shuddering I behold thee
The sorro s that enfold thee
And all thine endless pain
For Zeus thou h. st despiséd
Thy fea less heart misprizéd
All that his vengeance can
Thy wayward will obeying
Excess of hon u paying
Prometheus unto man.

And oh belovéd f r this graceless grace
What thanks? What prowess for thy bold essay
Shall champ on thee from men of mortal race
Th petty insects of a passing d y?
Saw st not how puny is the strength th y spend?
W th few faint steps walk ng as dreams and blind
Nor can the utmost of the r lore transcend
The harmony of the Eternal M nd
These thi gs I learned seei g thy glory dimmed
Pr metheus. Ah not thus on me was shed
Th rapture of sweet music when I hymned
Th marriage song round bath and bridal bed
At th ne espousals, a d of thy blood kin
A br de thou chosest wooi g her t thee
With all good gifts that may a Goddess win
Thy father s child d ine Hes ne

Enter Io cra ed a d horned

I What land is this? What people here ab de?
And wl o i he
The prisoner of this w ndswept mountain side?
Speak speak to me
Tell me poor caitiff how did st thou transgress,
Thus buff ted?
Wh ther am I half-dead with wea iness
For wande ed?
H ! Ha!
Again the prick the stab of gadfly-sti g!
O ea th earth hide
The hollow shape—Argus—that evil th ng—
The hu dred eyed
Earth born herdsman! I see him yet h stalks
W th stealthy pace
And crafty watch t all my poo wit baulks!
From the deep place
Of earth that hath his bo es he break th bound
A d f om the pale
Of Death th Underwo ld a hell ent hound
O t e blood trail
Fasting and faint he dri es me o before
W th pectral hand
Al g the w d ngs of the wasteful shore
Th salt sea sa d!
Last! La t! the pipe! h w drowzily it shrills!
A c icket-cry!

O Seest thou in warm affection detriment
Or aught untoward in adventuring?
Pr A load of toil and a light mind withal
Oc Then give me leave to call that sickness mine
Wise men accounted fools attain their ends
Pr *But how if I am galled by thine offence?*
Oc There very palpably thou thrustest home
Pr Beware lest thou through pity come to broils
Oc With one established in Omnipotence?
Pr Of him take heed lest thou find heaviness
Oc I am schooled by thy calamity Prometheus!
Pr Pack then! And prithee do not change thy mind!
Oc *Thou criest On to one in haste to go*
For look my dragon with impatient wings
Flaps at the broad smooth road of level air
Fain would he kneel him down in his own stall

Exit OCEANUS

Ch (*after alighting*) I mourn for thee Prometheus minished and brought low
Watering my virgin cheeks with these sad drops that flow
From sorrow s rainy fount to fill soft lidded eyes
With pure libations for thy fortune s obsequies
An evil portion that none coveteth hath Zeus
Prepared for thee by self made laws established for his use
Disposing all the elder Gods he purposeth to show
How strong is that right arm wherewith he smites a foe
There hath gone up a cry from earth a groaning for the fall
Of things of old renown and shapes majestical
And for thy passing an exceeding bitter groan
For thee and for thy brother Gods whose honour was thine own
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These by their nature fair nd fa ourable,
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The habits I described their mutual feuds
And friendships and the assemblages they hold,
And of the plumpness of the inward parts
What colour is a cept ble to the Gods,
The well-streaked l er lobe and gall bladder
Also by roastin limbs well wrapped in fat
And the long hine, I led m n on th oad
Of da k and riddlin kn wledg and I purged
The glancing eye f fire d m before
And made t meanin plain. These are my w rks.
Then things beneath the earth ands hid from man
Brass, iro sil er gold who dares t say
H as before me to disc erin ?
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B t touchin this I charge thee speak o word
N y et t ttr ly f tnctly kept
The secret from these bond hall set m free.

Chorus

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N er w eak the mi ht none stay th
On wayward will I mine
Ma I tint not t a
W th offerings f weet sa our
And fea ts f sa ghtered kine
The holy t th holy
W th freq t feet and lowly
At altar fane and shrin
Over the Ocean marches,
The deep that no drou ht parches,
Draw near to the d ine.
My tongue the Gods estrange not
My firm set purpose change not
As wax m lts in fire shine.
Sweet is the l fe that lengthens,
While joyous hope still strengthens,
And glad bright tho ghts sustain
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The sorrows that enfold thee
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Ha! Ha!
Aga the prick, the stab of gadfly sting!
O earth earth hide,
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And of the plumpness of the inward parts
What colour is acceptable to the Gods,
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Also by roasting limbs well wrapped in fat
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Of dark and riddling knowledge, and I purged
The glassy eye of fire, dim before,
And made its meaning plain. These are my works.
Then, things beneath the earth, aids hid from man
Brass, iron, silver, gold, who dares to say
He was before me in discovering?
None, I wot well, unless he loves to babble.
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Ch. So then Zeus is of lesser might than these?

Pr. Surely he shall not shun the lot apportioned.

Ch. What lot for Zeus save world without end to reign?

Pr. Tax me no further with importunate questions.

Ch. O deep the mystery thou shroudest there!

Pr. Of aught but this freely thou mayst discourse,
But touching this I charge thee speak no word;
Nay, veil it utterly, for strictly kept
The secret from these bonds shall set me free.

Chorus

May Zeus who all things swayeth
Ne'er wreak the might none stayeth
On wayward will of mine;
May I halt not nor waver
With offerings of sweet savour
And feasts of slaughtered kine
The holy rite, the holy
With frequent feet and lowly
At altar, fane and shrine,
Over the Ocean marches,
The deep that no drought parches,
Draw near to the divine.
My tongue the Gods estrange not,
My firm-set purpose change not
As wax melts in fire shine.
Sweet is the life that lengthens,
While joyous hope still strengthens,
And glad bright thoughts sustain;
But shuddering I behold thee,
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And all thine endless pain.
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With few faint steps walking as dream, and blind,
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At thine espousals, and of thy blood kin,
A bride thou bosest wooing her to thee
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The hundred-eyed
Earth-born herdsman! I see him yet: he stalks
With stealthy pace
And crafty watch not all my poor wit baulks!
From the deep place
Of earth that hath his bones he breaketh bound
And from the pale
Of Death, the Underworld's hell-sent hound,
On the blood trail,
Fasting and faint he drives me on before,
With spectral hand
Along the windings of the wasteful shore,
The salt sea sand!
List! List! the pipe! how drowsily it shrills!
A crick-t-cry!

See! See! the wax webbed reeds! Oh to these ills
Ye Gods on high
Ye blessed Gods what bourne? O wandering feet
When will ye rest?
O Cronian child wherein by aught unmeet
Have I transgressed
To be yoke fellow with Calamity?
My mind unstrung
A crack brained lack wit frantic mad am I
By gad fly stung
Thy scourge that tarres me on with buzzing wing!
Plunge me in fire
Hide me in earth to deep sea monsters fling
But my desire—
Kneeling I pray—grudge not to grant O King!
Too long a race
Stripped for the course have I run to and fro
And still I chase
The vanishing goal the end of all my woe
Enough have I mourned!
Hear st thou the lowing of the maid cow horned?
Pr How should I hear thee not? Thou art the child
Of Inachus dazed with the dizzying fly
The heart of Zeus thou hast made hot with love
And Hera s curse even as a runner stripped
Pursues thee ever on thine endless round
Io How dost thou know my father s name? Impart
To one like thee
A poor distressful creature who thou art
Sorrow with me
Sorrowful one! Tell me whose voice proclaims
Things true and sad
Naming by all their old unhappy names
What drove me mad—
Sick! Sick! ye Gods with suffering ye have sent
That clings and clings
Wasting my lamp of life till it be spent!
Crazed with your stings!
Famished I come with trampling and with leaping
Torment and shame
To Hera s cruel wrath her craft unsleeping
Captive and tame!
Of all wights woe begone and fortune crossed
Oh in the storm
Of the world s sorrow is there one so lost?
Speak godlike form
And be in this dark world my oracle!
Can st thou not sift
The things to come? Hast thou no art to tell
What subtle shift
Or sound of charming song shall make me well?
Hide naught of ill!
But—if indeed thou knowest—prophesy—
In words that thrill
Clear toned through air—what such a wretch as I
Must yet abide—
The lost lost maid that roams earth s kingdoms wide?
Pr What thou wouldst learn I will make clear to thee
Not weaving subtleties but simple sooth
Unfolding as the mouth should speak to friends
I am Prometheus giver of fire to mortals
Io Oh universal succour of mankind
Sorrowful Prometheus why art thou punished thus?
Pr I have but now ceased mourning for my griefs
Io Wilt thou not grant me then so small a boon?
Pr What is it thou dost ask? Thou shalt know all
Io Declare to me who chained thee in this gorge
Pr The hest of Zeus but twas Hephæstus hand
Io But what transgression dost thou expiate?
Pr Let this suffice thee thou shalt know no more
Io Nay but the end of my long wandering
When shall it be? This too thou must declare
Pr That it is better for thee not to know
Io Oh hide not from me what I have to suffer!
Pr Poor child! Poor child! I do not grudge the gift
Io Why then art thou so slow to tell me all?
Pr It is not from unkindness but I fear
Twill break thy heart
Io Take thou no thought for me
Where thinking thwarteth heart s desire!
Pr So keen
To know thy sorrows! List! and thou shalt learn
Ch Not till thou hast indulged a wish of mine
First let us hear the story of her grief
And she herself shall tell the woeful tale
After thy wisdom shall impart to her
The conflict yet to come
Pr So be it then
And Io thus much courtesy thou owest
These maidens being thine own father s kin
For with a moving story of our woes
To win a tear from weeping auditors
In nought demeans the teller
Io I know not
How fitly to refuse and at your wish
All ye desire to know I will in plain
Round terms set forth And yet the telling of it
Harrows my soul this winter s tale of wrong
Of angry Gods and brute deformity
And how and why on me these horrors swooped
Always there were dream visiting by night
The woman s chambers where I slept and they
With flattering words admonished and cajoled me
Saying O lucky one so long a maid?
And what a match for thee if thou would st wed!
Why pretty here is Zeus as hot as hot—
Love sick—to have thee! Such a bolt as thou
Hast shot clean through his heart! And he won t rest
Till Cypris help him win thee! Lift not then
My daughter a proud foot to spurn the bed
Of Zeus but get thee gone to meadow deep
By Lerna s marsh where are thy father s flocks
And cattle folds that on the eye of Zeus
May fall the balm that shall assuage desire
Such dreams oppressed me troubling all my nights

Woes me! till I plucked courage up to tell
My father of these fears that walked in darkness.
And many times to Pytho and Dodona
He sent his sacred missi ners, to inquire
How or by deed or word he m ht conf rm
T the h h will and pleasure of the Gods.
And th y returned with slippery o cles,
Nou ht plain but all to baffle a d perplex—
And then at last to Inachus there raught
A saying that flashed clear the drift that I
Must be put out from home and country forced
To be a anderer t the nds of the earth
A th g d ote and ded cat nd if
I ould not there should fall thunderbolt
From Zeus, with bli d ng fla h nd utterly
Destroy my race So pake the oracle
Of Loxias. *In sorrow he obeyed*
And from beneath his roof d ve forth h s child
Grie ng as he grie ed and from house and h me
Bolted and ba ed me out But the h h hand
O Zeus bear ha dly on th rein of fate
And instantly—even in a m ment—mind
And body off ted stran e dist t on. H rned
E en a ye see me now a d with *sharp bite*
Of g 'fly p ked with high flu skip stark mad
I bounded gall p ng head g on until
I came to the eet wate of the *stream*
K h un ha d by Lerna spri g A d thith r
Argus, th giant he dsma fie e a d fell
As a strong un unmixed with hat f l cast
Of all his cunning yes upon the trail
Ga e chase d tracked me d wn And there he
perished
By v l t and sudde doom surp ised
B t I with d u g t ng—the sc rpio wh p
Of angry Gods—am la hed fr m la d to land
Thou hast my story a d if th u ca t tell
What I ha t ll t suffe peak but d not
Moved by c mpassi n w th lying t le
W m my cold heart sick ess of the soul
I half so shameful as composed fal hoods.

Ch Off! lost one! ff! Horro I cry!
H or and *misery!*
Was this the tra elle s tale I craved to hear?
Oh that mine eyes sh uld see
A sight so ill to look upon! Ah m !
Sorr w defil m nt hauntin *fear*
Fan my blood ld
Stabbed w th t o-edg d tung!
O F te F t F te t emblingly I beh ld
Th pl ght f Io, thine appo tions gl

Pr Thou dost lament too soon and art s one
All fea Refra thyself till thou hast heard
What s yet to be.
Ch Speak and be our instru t r
Th is kind f balm t the sick so l
In certa n k owled e of th gr f to me.
Pr Your former wish I lightly granted ye
And y ha heard even as ye desired
From this maid s lips the story of her sorrow
Now hear the sequel the ensu g woes
The damsel must endu e from Hera s hate
And thou O seed of Inachæan loins
Weigh well my w rds that thou may st understand
Thy journey s end First towards the rising sun
Turn hence and traverse fields that ne er felt
ploug!
Until thou reach the country of the Scyths
A race of wanderers handling the long bow
That shoots afar and having the r habitations
Und r the open sky in wattled cotes
That mo e on wheels Go not thou nigh to them
But e r within sou d of the breaking wa es
P ss thro gh their land And on the left of thee
The Chalybes workers in i on dwell
Beware of them for they are savages
Who suffer n t a stranger to come near
And thou sl alt reach the r er Hybristes,
Well named Cross not for it is ill to cross,
Unt l thou come e en unto Caucasus,
H l est of m untains where the foaming river
Blows all its lume from th summit ridge
That ertops all And that stat ne ghboured e dge
Thy feet mu t climb a d f llow th road
That unneth s uth thou presently shall reach
Th *Amazonian* hosts that loathe the male
And shall on day remo e from thence and found
Themiscyra hard by Thermodon s stream
Where n the craggy Salmadessian coast
W es gna h th r teeth the ma of mariners
A d tep-moth r of sh ps And they sh ll lead thee
Upon thy way and with a ght good will
Th n shalt thou come to the Cimmerian Isthmus,
E en at the pass and portals of the sea
And lea ing it behind thee sto t of heart
Cross o er the chann l of Mæot Lake
F re r famo s mo g men hall be
The story of thy cross ng a d the strait
B called by a new name the Bosporus,
In memory f thee Then ha ing left
E opa s so I behind th e thou shalt come
To the main la d of Asia What think ye?
Is n t the o ly ruler of the Gods
A compl te tyra t viole t to all
Respecting n ne? First be ng himself a God
He burneth to enjo a mortal maid
And then torments l er ith the wanderings.
A so ry suitor f r thy lo e poor g rl
A bitter wooing Yet ha ng heard so much
Th u art not e en in the overture
And prelude of the so g
I Alas! Oh! Oh!
Pr Thou dost cry out fetching again deep
groans
What wilt thou do when thou hast heard in full
The e ils yet to come?
Ch And wilt thou tell
The maiden somethi g fu ther som f esh sorrow?
P A st rmy sea f wro g d ruin g
Io What does t p fit me t li e! Oh why
Do I n t th w my elf from thi o h crag
And n leap id me of all my pain?

Better to die at once than live and all
My days be evil

Pr Thou would st find it hard
To bear what I must bear for unto me
It is not given to die —a dear release
From pain but now of suffering there is
No end in sight till Zeus shall fall

Io And shall
Zeus fall? His power be taken from him?
No matter when if true—

Pr Twould make thee
happy
Methinks if thou could st see calamity
Whelm him

Io How should it not when all my woes
Are of his sending?

Pr Well then thou may st
learn how
These things shall be

Io Oh who will snatch away
The tyrant s rod?

Pr Himself by his own vain
And fond imaginings

Io But how? Oh speak
If the declaring draw no evil down!

Pr A marriage he shall make shall vex him sore

Io A marriage? Whether of gods or mortals?
Speak!
If this be utterable!

Pr Why dost thou ask
What I may not declare?

Io And shall he quit
The throne of all the worlds by a new spouse
Supplanted?

Pr She will bear to him a child
And he shall be in might more excellent
Than his progenitor

Io And he will find
No way to parry this strong stroke of fate?

Pr None save my own self—when these bonds
are loosed

Io And who shall loose them if Zeus wills not?

Pr One
Of thine own seed

Io How say st thou? Shall a child
Of mine release thee?

Pr Son of thine but son
The thirteenth generation shall beget

Io A prophecy oracularly dark

Pr Then seek not thou to know thine own fate

Io Nay
Tender me not a boon to snatch it from me

Pr Of two gifts thou hast asked one shall be
thine

Io What gifts? Pronounce and leave to me the
choice

Pr Nay thou are free to choose Say therefore
whether
I shall declare to thee thy future woes
Or him who shall be my deliverer

Ch Nay but let both be granted! Unto her
That which she chooseth unto me my choice
That I too may have honour from thy lips.
First unto her declare her wanderings
And unto me him who shall set thee free
Tis that I long to know

Pr I will resist
No further but to your importunacy
All things which ye desire to learn reveal
And Io first to thee I will declare
Thy far-driven wanderings write thou my words
In the retentive tablets of thy heart
When thou hast crossed the flood that flows
between
And is the boundary of two continents
Turn to the sun s uprising where he treads
Printing with fiery steps the eastern sky
And from the roaring of the Pontic surge
Do thou pass on until before thee lies
The Gorgonean plain Kisthene called
Where dwell the gray haired three the Phorcides,
Old mumbling maids swan shaped having one eye
Betwixt the three and but a single tooth
On them the sun with his bright beams ne er
glanceth
Nor moon that lamps the night Not far from them
The sisters three the Gorgons have their haunt
Winged forms with snaky locks hateful to man
Whom nothing mortal looking on can live
Thus much that thou may st have a care of these
Now of another portent thou shalt hear
Beware the dogs of Zeus that ne er give tongue
The sharp beaked gryphons and the one eyed
horde
Of Arimaspians riding upon horses
Who dwell around the river rolling gold
The ferry and the frith of Pluto s port
Go not thou nigh them After thou shalt come
To a far land a dark skinned race that dwell
Beside the fountains of the sun whence flows
The river Æthiops follow its banks
Until thou comest to the steep down slope
Where from the Bibline mountains Nilus old
Pours the sweet waters of his holy stream
And thou the river guiding thee shalt come
To the three sided wedge shaped land of Nile
Where for thyself Io and for thy children
Long sojourn is appointed If in aught
My story seems to stammer and to err
From indirectness ask and ask again
Till all be manifest I do not lack
For leisure having more than well contents me!

Ch If there be aught that she must suffer yet
Or aught omitted in the narrative
Of her long wanderings I pray thee speak
But if thou hast told all then grant the boon
We asked and doubtless thou wilt call to mind

Pr Nay she has heard the last of her long
journey
But as some warrant for her patient hearing
I will relate her former sufferings
Ere she came hither Much I will omit
That had detained us else with long discourse
And touch at once her journey s thus far goal

When thou wast come to the Molossian plain
That lies about the high top of Dodona
Where is an oracle and shrine of Zeus
Thesprotian, and—portent past belief—
The talking oaks, the same from whom the word
Flashed clear and nothing questionably hailed thee
The destined spouse—ah! do I touch old wounds?—
Of Zeus, honoured above thy sex, stung thence
In torment, where the road runs by the sea
Thou cam'st to the broad gulf of Rhea whence
Beat back by a strong wind thou didst retrace
Most painfully thy course, and it shall be
That times to come in memory of thy passage
Shall call that inlet the Ionian Sea.
Thus much for thee in witness that my mind
Beholdeth more than that which leaps to light.
Now for the things to come, what I shall say
Concerns ye both alike. Return we then
And follow our old track. There is a city
Ycleipt Canobus, built at the land's end
Even at the mouth and mounded silt of Nile
And there shall Zeus restore to thee thy mind
With touch benign and laying on of hands.
And from that touch thou shalt conceive and bear
Swarth Epaphus, touch-born, and he shall reap
As much of earth as Nilus watereth
With his broad flowing river. In descent
The fifth from him there shall come back to Argos,
Their ancient home, but driven by hard hap
Two score and ten maids, daughters of one house,
Fleeing pollution of unlawful *marriage*
With their next kin, who winged with wild desire
As hawks that follow hard on cushat-doves,
Shall *harry* prey which they should not pursue
And hunt forbidden brides. But God shall be
Exceeding jealous of their chastity
And old Pelasgia, *for the mortal thrust*
Of woman's hand and *midnight murder* done
Upon their new wed lords, shall shelter them
For every wife shall take her *husband* down
Dipping a two-edged broadsword in his blood.
Oh that mine enemies might wed such wives!
But of the fifty one alone desire
Shall tame as with the stroke of charming wand
So that she shall not lift her hands to slay
The partner of her bed yea melting love
Shall blunt her sharp-set will, and she shall choose
Rather to be called weak and womanly
Than the dark stain of blood and she shall be
Mother of kings in Argos. 'Tis a tale
Were it told in full, would occupy us long
For of her sowing there shall spring to fame
The lion whelp the archer bold whose bow
Shall set me free. This is the oracle
Themis, my ancient Mother, Titan born,
Discoursed to me but how and in what wise
Were long to tell, nor would it profit thee.

Io

Again they come again
The fury and the pain!
The gangrened wound! The ache of pulses dinned
With raging throes!
It beats upon my brain—the burning wind
That madness blows!
It pricks—the barb the hook, not forged with heat,
The gadfly dart!
Against my ribs with thud of trampling feet
Hammers my heart!
And like a bowling wheel mine eyeballs spin
And I am flung
By fierce winds from my course, nor can rein in
My frantic tongue
That raves I know not what!—a random tide
Of words—a froth
Of muddied waters buffeting the wide
High crested hateful wave of ruin and God's
wrath!

Exit raving

Ch I hold him wise who first in his own mind
This canon fixed and taught it to mankind
True marriage is the union that mates
Equal with equal not where wealth emasculates,
Or mighty lineage is magnified
Should he who earns his bread look for a bride.
Therefore grave mistresses of fate I pray
That I may never live to see the day
When Zeus takes me for his bedfellow or I
Draw near in love to husband from on high.
For I am full of fear when I behold
Io, the maid no human love may fold
And her virginity disconsolate,
Homeless and husbandless by Hera's hate
For me when love is level, fear is far
May none of all the Gods that *greater are*
Eye me with his unshunnable regard
For in that warfare *victory is* hard
And of that plenty cometh emptiness.
What should befall me then I dare not guess
Nor whither I should flee that I might shun
The craft and subtlety of Cronos' Son

Pr I tell thee that the self willed pride of Zeus
Shall surely be abased that even now
His plots a marriage that shall hurl him forth
Far out of sight of his imperial throne
And kingly dignity. Then, in that hour
Shall be fulfilled nor in one tittle fail
The curse wherewith his father Cronos cursed him,
What time he fell from his majestic place
Established from of old. And such a *stroke*
None of the Gods save me could turn aside.
I know these things shall be and on what wise.
Therefore let him secure him in his seat
And put his trust in airy noise and wing
His bright two-handed blazing thunderbolt,
For these shall nothing stead him nor avert
Fall insupportable and glory humbled
A wrestler of such might he maketh ready
For his own ruin yea, a wonder strong
Even the unmatchable and he shall find
Fire that shall set at naught the burning bolt
And blasts more dreadful that o'er-crow the thunder
The pestilence that scourgeth the deep seas
And shakes the solid *earth* the three pronged mace,
Poseidon's spear a mightier shall scatter

And when he stumbleth striking there his foot
Fallen on evil days the tyrant s pride
Shall measure all the miserable length
That parts rule absolute from servitude
Ch Methinks the wish is father to the thought
And whets thy railing tongue
Pr Not so the wish
And the accomplishment go hand in hand
Ch Then must we look for one who shall supplant
And reign instead of Zeus?
Pr Calamity
Far far more grievous shall bow down his neck
Ch Hast thou no fear venting such blasphemy?
Pr What should I fear who have no part nor lot
In doom of dying?
Ch But he might afflict thee
With agony more dreadful pain beyond
These pains
Pr Why let him if he will!
All evils I foreknow
Ch Ah they are wise
Who do obeisance prostrate in the dust
To the implacable eternal Will
Pr Go thou and worship fold thy hands in prayer
And be the dog that licks the foot of power!
Nothing care I for Zeus yea less than naught!
Let him do what he will and sway the world
His little hour he has not long to lord it
Among the Gods
Oh! here his runner comes!
The upstart tyrant s lacquey! He ll bring news
A message never doubt it from his master
Enter HERMES
Hermes You the sophistical rogue the heart of gall
The renegade of heaven to short lived men
Purveyor of prerogatives and titles
Fire thief! Dost hear me? I ve a word for thee
Thou rt to declare— this is the Father s pleasure
These marriage feasts of thine whereof thy tongue
Rattles a pace and by the which his greatness
Shall take a fall And look you rede no riddles
But tell the truth in each particular
Exact I am not to sweat for thee Prometheus
Upon a double journey And thou seest
Zeus by thy dark defiance is not moved
Pr A very olemn piece of insolence
Spoken like an underling of the Gods! Ye are young!
Ye are young! New come to power! And ye suppose
Your towered citadel Calamity
Can never enter! Ah and have not I
Seen from those pinnacles a two fold fall
Of tyrants? And the third who his brief now
Of lordship arrogates I shall see yet
By lapse most swift most ignominious
Sink to perdition And dost thou suppose
I crouch and cower in reverence and awe
To God of yesterday? I fail of that
So much the total all of space and time
Bulks in between Take thyself hence and count
Thy toiling steps back by the way thou camest
In nothing wiser for thy questionin s.
Her This is that former stubbornness of thine
That brought thee hither to foul anchorage
Pr Mistake me not I would not if I mi ht
Change my misfortunes for thy vassalage
Her Oh! better be the vassal of this rock
Than born the trusty messenger of Zeus!
Pr I answer insolence as it deserves,
With insolence How else should it be answered?
Her Surely and being in trouble it is plain
You revel in your plight
Pr Revel forsooth!
I would my enemies might hold such revels
And thou amongst the first
Her Dost thou blame me
For thy misfortunes?
Pr I hate all the Gods
Because having received good at my hands
They have rewarded me with evil
Her This
Proves thee stark mad!
Pr Mad as you please if hating
Your enemies is madness
Her Were all well
With thee thou dst be insufferable!
Pr Alas!
Her Alas that Zeus knows not that word Alas!
Pr But ageing Time teacheth all knowledge
Her Time
Hath not yet taught thy rash imperious will
Over wild impulse to win mastery
Pr Nay had Time taught me that I had not stooped
To bandy words with such a slave as thou
Her This then is all thine answer thou lt not speak
One syllable of what our Father asks.
Pr Oh that I were a debtor to his kindness!
I would requite him to the uttermost!
Her A cutting speech! You take me for a boy
Whom you may taunt and tease
Pr Why art thou not
A boy —a very booby —to suppose
Thou wilt get aught from me? There is no wrong
However shameful nor no shift of malice
Whereby Zeus shall persuade me to unlock
My lips until these shackles be cast loose
Therefore let lightning leap with smoke and flame
And all that is be beat and tossed together
With whirl of feathery snow flakes and loud crack
Of subterranean thunder none of these
Shall bend my will or force me to disclose
By whom tis fated he shall fall from power
Her What good can come of this? Think yet again!
Pr I long ago have thought and long ago
Determined
Her Patience! patience! thou rash fool!
Have so much patience as to school thy mind
To a right judgment in thy present troubles
Pr Lo, I am rockfast and thy words are waves
That weary me in vain Let not the thought

Enter thy mind that I in awe of Zeus
Shall change my nature for a girl's, or beg
The Loathed beyond all loathing—with my hands
Spread out in woman's fashion—to cast loose
These bonds from that I am utterly removed.
Her. I have talked much yet further not my purpose
For thou art in no whit melted or moved
By my prolonged entreaties like a colt
New to the harness thou dost back and plunge,
Snap at thy bit and fight against the rein.
And yet thy confidence is in a straw
For stubbornness, if one be in the wrong
Is in itself weaker than naught at all.
See now if thou wilt not obey my words,
What storm what triple-crested wave of woe
Unshunnable shall come upon thee. First
This rocky chasm shall the Father split
With earthquake thunder and his burning bolt
And he shall hide thy form, and thou shalt hang
Bent upon by dandled in the rock's rude arms.
Nor till thou hast completed thy long term
Shalt thou come back into the light and then
The winged hound of Zeus, the tawny eagle,
Shall violently fall upon thy flesh
And rend it as twere rags and every day
And all day long shall thin unbidden guest
Sit at thy table feasting on thy liver
Till he hath gnawn it black. Look for no term
To such anguish until there stand forth
Among the Gods one who shall take upon him
Thy sufferings and consent to enter hell
Far from the light of Sun, yea, the deep pit
And murk of Tartarus, for thee. Be advised
This is not stuffed speech framed to frighten thee
But woeful truth. For Zeus knows not to lie
And every word of his shall be fulfilled
Look sharp to thyself then weigh my words
And do not in thy folly think self will
Better than prudent counsel.
Ch. To our mind
The words of Hermes fail not of the mark,
For he enjoins thee to let self will go
And follow after prudent counsels. Him
Harken for error in the wise is shame.
Pr. These are stale tidings I foreknew
Therefore such suffering is the due
A foe must pay his foes.
Let curled lightnings clasp and lash
And close upon my limbs loud crash
The thunder and fierce throes
Of maddening wind upon pulse calm a
The embowelled base earth root uptear
And toss beyond its bars,
The rough surge till the ocean deep
In one dread onrush del sweep
The paths of the stars!
Finally let him fling my form
Down whirling gulfs, the central storm
Of black let me lie
Plunged in the black Tartarean gloom
Yet—yet—his sentence shall not doom
This deathless self to die!
Her. These are the workings of a brain
More than a little touched the run
Of voluble ecstasy!
Surely he wandereth from the way
His reason lost who thus can pray!
A mouthing madman he!
Therefore, O ye who court his fate
Rash mourners—ere it be too late
And ye indeed are sad
For vengeance spurning hither fast—
Hence! lest the bellowing thunderblast
Like him should strike you mad!
Ch. Words which might work persuasion speak
If thou must counsel me nor seek
Thus, like a stream in spate,
To uproot mine honour. Dost thou dare
Urge me to baseness? I will bear
With him all blows of fate
For false forsakers I despise
At treachery my gorge doth rise
I spew it forth with hate!
Her. Only—with ruin on your track—
Rail not at fortune but look back
And these my word recall
Neither blame Zeus that he hath sent
Sorrow no warning word forewent!
Ye labour for your fall
With your own hands! Not by surprise
Nor yet by stealth but with clear eyes,
Knowing the thing ye do,
Ye walk into the yawning net
That for the feet of fools is set
And Ruin spreads for you. *Exit*
Pr. The time is past for words earth quakes
Sensibly hark! pent thunder rakes
The depths, with bellowing din
Of echoes rolling ever nigher
Lightnings shake out their locks of fire
The dust cones dance and spin
The skipping winds, as if possessed
By faction—north, south east and west
Puff at each other sea
And sky are shook together Lo!
The swing and fury of the blow
Wherewith Zeus smiteth me
Sweepeth apace, and visibly
To strike my heart with fear See, see,
Earth, awful Mother! Air
That sheddest from the revolving sky
On all the light they see thee by
What bitter wrongs I bear!
The scene closes with earthquake and thunder in the midst of which PROMETHEUS and the DAUGHTERS OF OCEANUS sink into the abyss.

AGAMEMNON

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

WATCHMAN
CHORUS OF ARGIVE ELDERS
CLYTAEMNESTRA *wife of Agamemnon*
A HERALD
AGAMEMNON *King of Argos*
CASSANDRA *daughter of Priam and slave of Agamemnon*
AEGISTHUS *son of Thyestes cousin of Agamemnon*
ATTENDANTS

Argos The Atreidæ s Palace

Watchman

I have made suit to Heaven for release
A twelvemonth long from this hard service here
At watch on the Atreidæ s roof to lie
As if these arms were paws and I a dog
I know the nightly concourse of the stars
And which of the sky s bright regents bring us storm
Which summer when they set and their uprisings
Once more on guard I look for the signal brand
The flash of fire that shall bring news from Troy
And bruit her fall so absolute for hope
Is woman s heart strong with a man s resolve
And now the dewy vast and vagrant night
Is all my lodging never visited
By dreams for Fear not Slumber stands fast by
So that sound sleep may never latch my lids
And would I sing or whistle physicking
The drowsy sense with music s counter charm
Tears in my voice my song soon sinks to sighs
For the changed fortunes of this house no more
As whilome ruled and wrought with excellence
Oh that the hour were come for my release!
Oh for the gloom s glad glow of herald fire!
(*The Beacon shines out on Mt Arachne*)
Brave lantern! Out of darkness bringing bright
Day! Jolly dance and jocund revelry
To all broad Argos for this fair windfall!
Oho! Below there! Ho!
Mount Agamemnon s wife starlike from sleep
Ascend and wake *the palace with thy rouse!*
For by this fiery courier Ilium
Is taken! Heigh! but I will trip it first!
This is king s luck but it shall vantage me!
This bully brand hath thrown me sixes three!
Oh good to cherish my King s hand in mine
When he comes home and the household hath a head!
But not a whisper more the thresher ox
Hath trampled on my tongue And yet these walls
Could tell a plain tale Give me a man that knows
And I ll discourse *with him else am I mute*
And all my memory oblivion
Exit Enter CHORUS

Chorus

Nine years have fled on Time s eternal wings
And now the tenth is well nigh flown
Since the Atreidæ of this two fold throne
By grace of God the double sceptred kings—
Prince Menelaus Priam s adversary
And Agamemnon—from our coast
Weighed anchor with a thousand ships
Mustering the valour of the Argive host
Their hearts were hot within them from their lips
Thundered the battle cry
Like eagles scream when round and round they rove
High o er their nest in solitary woe
Because their eyasses are ta en
And all their watch was vain
And all their labour lost
But One above Apollo Pan or Zeus
Shall at the voice of their despair
Pitying his co mates of the cloudless air
Send the Destroying Angel that pursues
With penal pangs the feet that have transgressed
And so One mightier Zeus of Host and Guest
The sons of Atreus gainst false Paris sent
And for a wife of many husbands wooed
Ordains War s tourney in long drawn prelude
Knapping of spears knees in the dust down bent
For Greek and Trojan ere His wrath be spent
Now a it may the quarrel goes
Fate shapes the close
None shall appease with cups or fire to fa got laid
For sacrifice unburnt the stubborn wrath unstayed

We with old limbs outworn
Were left behind unworthy of the fray
A staff our stay
Our strength a babe s newborn
For pith of young bones potent over all
Is eld s compeer a puny chief
There is no room for Ares stark and tall
And with the yellowing leaf
Life s last must tread the three foot way
A babe a dream stolen forth into the day
But thou Tyndareus daughter Queen
Clytaemnestra what s this stir?
What news? What harbinger
Hath thine intelligencer been
That thou hast passed the word for sacrifice

No altar none, to all the City s liberties,
Whether to God of Sky or Earth or Street
Or Entry owed,
But is ablaze with gifts,
And, from all quarters, even to the abysm
Of eight, the dazzling cresset lifts
An odorous cloud,
Exceeding pure and comforting and sweet,
With holy chrism
Of nard and frankincense anointed o er
The richest unguents of the royal store.
If there is aught
Thou canst or may st declare,
Speak on, and be physician to my thought,
Which oft is sick, and oft
When Hope from these bra e altars leaps aloft,
Bids th wood b to Cark nd Care.

Now am I minstrel and master
Of many t chant the Lay
Of th Token, the Mighty Wonder
That met them on their way

These two kings ripe in manhood.
I am old but in me bloweth strong
The wind of God the rapture
That girds me with valiance for song

Tell then, my tongue, of the omen
That sped gainst the Teucrian land
The Achaeans twin bronzed chi ftains,
With spear and eneeful hand.

Lords f the Youth of H llas,
Right well did they agree,
And the kin f the birds these sea kings
Bad launch and put to sea.

Lo, a black ea le sheen and lo,
With him an ea le pied,
B the King tents, in royal show
Lit on the spear hand side.

A hare their meat, all quick with young
T en, her la t doublings o er
Be Sorrow Sorrow s burden sung
But cro n Joy conqueror!

Thereat th wise war prophet
Right well pplied hi art
Knowing th sons of Atreus
Were men of di erse heart

In the pair that devoured the trembler
H read by his deep lore
A symbol f th royal twain
That led th host t war

And thus he spake Long leaguer
B t Priam s city shall fall
At last, her cattle and commons
B tchered without her wall

Come there from Heaven no wrath cloud s lower
To dull with dark alloy
The mighty bit that s forged with power
The host that bridles Troy

For wrun with ruth is Artemis,
White flower of maidenhood
Wroth with her Father s wingèd hounds,
That shed the trembler s blood

Poor doe that limped with wombèd young
That meat she doth abhor
Be Sorrow Sorrow s burden sung
But crown Joy conqueror!

Fair One as thy love can bless
Little whelps as weak as dew
Of the ra enin lioness
And at breast all beastlings small
Shield throu h forests virginal
Wingèd weird that fair doth show
And y t darkly worketh woe
To some happy end ensue!
And, O Healer hear my prayer
Lest in wrath the Goddess rouse
Baffling winds that will not change,
All the Danaan fleet laid by
Speedin that unlawful strange,
Unfestal fea t that rite ccursed,
Of quarrel inly nursed,
To a true man perilous,
The bhorred artificer
For behold within the house
Coiled and fanged Conspiracy
Turns to strike with forked tongue,
Mindful of her murdered youn "

So thundered the oice of Calchas,
From birds with doom in their wings,
Encountered by the marching host
Tellin the Fate of Kin s.

Tuned to the pr phet s bodeful tongue,
Let your son sink and soar
Be Sorro Sorrow s burden sung
But crown Joy conqueror!

Zeus—whoso er H be Whose state excels
All language s syllables,
Knowin not so much
As whether He love that nam or lo e t not
Zeus—while I put all knowledge to the touch,
And all experience patie tly assay
I find n other name to hea e away
The burden f unmanageable thought.

The sometime greatest wrangler of them all
H th wrestled t his fall
His day is done,
H hath no name, his glory s lustreless.
H that doth all outwrestle, all outrun
Hath whelmed the next that rose up huge and strong.

But if Zeus triumph be thy victory song
Thou shalt be founded in all Soothfastness

He maketh men to walk in Wisdom s ways
In Suffering He lays
Foundations deep
Of Knowledge At the heart remembered Pain
As of a wound that bleeds waketh in sleep
Though we reject her Wisdom finds a road
Then tis a gift untenderly bestowed
By Thronèd Spirits that austerely reign.

So with the Elder Captain of the power
Achæan in that hour
No blame he cast
On prophet or seer but bowed him to the blow
What time they had no meat to stay their fast
And all their ships lay idle straitened sore
Where betwixt Chalcis and the hither shore
The tides of Aulis battle to and fro

Strong winds from Strymon ill inaction brought
Lean fast and layings up of little ease
With waste of ships and tackle yea there wrought
In men s minds wilderment of weltering seas
Day like to day and hour on changeless hour
Fretted of Argive chivalry the flower

But when was mooted to the Chiefs a way
To work a calm more dread than tempest is
And clarion voiced the Prophet in that day
Thundered unpityingly— Artemis —
The Atreidæ with their sceptres smote the earth
Nor could keep back their tears and thus in birth

The Elder spake and gave their sorrow vent
It were a heavy doom to disobey
And heavy if my Child the ornament
And glory of my house I needs must slay
A Father s slaughterous hands foully imbrued
Hard by the altar with her maiden blood

What choice is here where all is ill? he cried
Am I to leave the vessels to their fate?
Am I to lose the friends with me allied?
Lo now a sacrifice which shall abate
Storm winds with blood of victim virginal
Law sanctions they press hard then God mend all!

But once he let Necessity make fast
Her yoke no longer chafing to be galled
His altered spirit leaning to the blast
Swept on unblest unholy unappalled
For a false wisdom first
Being indeed a madness of the mind
Tempts with a thought accursed
And then enures to wrong the wretch of human kind
Not backward now but desperately bold
The slayer of his Child behold
That armèd Vengeance woman s rape chastise
And storm stayed ships sail free for that rich sacrifice

To those stern judges absolute for war
Her prayers were nothing nor her piteous cry
Father father pleading evermore,
Nor womanhood nor young virginity
But after uttered prayer
He bade who served the sacrifice be bold
In her long robe that flowed so fair
Seize her amain and high above the altar hold
All laxed and drooping as men hold a kid
And that she might not curse his house he bid
Lock up her lovely lips and mew the sound
Of her sweet voice with curb of dumbing bridle bound

Her saffron robe let fall
She smote her slayers all
With eye glance piteous arrowily keen
And still and fair as form in picture seen
Would speak Oh in her father s hall
His guests among
When the rich board
Was laden with good cheer
How often had she sung
And when the third thank offering was poured
With girl s voice virginal and clear
Her father s pæan hymned with holy glee,
Had graced how often and how lovingly!

Thereafter what befell
I saw not neither tell
Only the craft of Calchas cannot fail
For Justice casting Suffering in the scale
Her balance poise imponderable
With Knowledge trims
What s far away
Thou lt know when it is nigh
But greet not Sorrow till she swims
Full into ken nor make fool s haste to sigh
She comes clear seen with morning ray
And yet I look to see a happier hour
As doth the wishful Queen our Apia s lone watch tower

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA.

My duty Clytæmnestra brings me here
And that just awe which is his consort s right
When the king s throne stands empty of its lord
'Twould ease my old heart much might I but know
The meaning of these sacrificial fires
Are they for good news had or hope of good?
I ask but if thou art not free to speak
I am no malcontent I cavil not

Clytæmnestra You know the saw Good Night bring forth Good Morrow
Well here is happiness surpassing hope
The Argive power hath taken Priam s city
Ch Have taken—troth thy words have taken wing
I think my unfaith scared them

Cl Troy t taken

Troy—do you ma k m ?—in the Achæans hands

Ch O joy! too sweet too sudden! It draws tears

From these old eyes

Cl In leed they speak for thee

They ou h l yal heart

Ch But is it tru ?

And hast tho any proof?

Cl Oh proof enough—

O we are gulled by God

Ch Whetl er a t thou

In ered l s mood un ler the power of dreams?

Cl 'Ti n t my way to n se abroad a nothing

That nods to me in sleep

Ch Then has a tale

W g s t made fat your h pe?

Cl You ate me low

Y u reckon me a g ldy g l.

Ch How long

Is t s ce the town was taken?

Cl This same n ght

That now in trava l with the b rth of lay

Ch Wh wa the n mble ourie th t c uld bring

The ews so q kly?

Cl Hephæstus fus l ght

Sh o t of Id o ward the it treamed

Beac n to beacon l ke fi y mal

Post g tl ews. Ida t H rmes Rid e

In Lemnos then steep Athos, Zeus wn hill

Ca ht f om th sle the m ght b nd Upl ft

It d cked the b oad de p th a be f light

Journe n n stre gth journ y in joy It

m t

All gold n gl cs l ke the su n Heave

M k tos wa d tow r Whereat the watch,

N th g un ead oth g dazed th l p

O E p s t c m ng t ld

T E Messap on se t el A d they

Se t p from r kl heath old and dry

A sw t glar th t il hed the tid ng on

In speed u pent in powe d mmed it sa led

Across Aso us pla n l ke b t ht moon beam

Then n Cithæron g p c woke fresh

Response f m t e fi Th m o g rd

H iled that l t a ll d d ed h m n t

K ndl g th m ht t fla e f all It leaped

Cor Lak pt A g pl t bade

Nod ll ng w th t c pt w t in fir

I st t hork t a g eat cu led beard f flame

Le t ia t th t fl g glow b o d

Th pe that look th Sar ic G lf

Th d w u d pped n n A ch e crag

It l fl ht t ed t ll on th palace oof

Of At lin s n ray f gl f ll

Of H pa t beac n ot n ed

This m t h a d the d i g of it

R ll n call pl n hed w th w fire

A d h th n wh an fi t and last

H p oof f ou h t your warranty

Th wh h m h ha d sent m ut f Troy

Ch Lady I ll to my pray rs b t satisfy

My wonde fir t the I ll tha k th Gods

Tell me s th u know st how the tale again

Again and more at large

Cl The Achæans hold

Troy To n to day and there is heard within

Her walls m thinks sounds that are ill to mix.

Pour o l and e s l in the selfsame crock

And they will part unkindly Even so

Two voices are there each distinguishable

Both vocal of di er it es of fate

Here there are falling d wn about the dead

Dead husb nds a d dead broth rs here are sires

Un hilded no v ld sad and free no more

L ft n tl e voice of grief f r their best belo ed

And there n ght tra glin Rapine sits l im down

In after b ttle wearin s and breaks

H s fast o what th t wn affords not now

Quartered by r te but as fo tu e of war

Deals each in the h mes of Troy th captive homes,

They lie at ease not under frosty tars

In de d enched b ouacs how blest shall be

The r sleep no gua d t m unt all th night long!

Now if they ord r them with re erence

To the Gods of the falle city and her shrines,

The shall not spo l to be aga n despo led

L t them not lu t after f rbidden prey

F r it importeth much they come safe home

No th t the r cou e be d sh ther If th y come

Fre fro n ffen e to Heaven the wound yet green

Fo those that we h e lost shall dress itself

In sm l s t el om them except for Fate

E cept th re fall some udden st oke of Fate

Well no I ha e possessed you of my tho ghts

A woman s thought but on who would ha e good

Mou t to h r t umph without let or stay

M h faith m tured ht well and twere to me

A del cate j to g the n the fruit

Ch Lady th u surely l a t a woman s heart

But man s sense tha l d bt no more

N l g r will l fe my thanks to Hea en

For all the to l a d the lon strain of war

There h th been dealt right noble r compe se.

Exit C YTAE NESTRA

K g Zeus a d N ht th fr endly Night

Our La y of the St that dropped

With lo m h ng of light

A l that Troy s tall t wers o ertopped

Till t ngled in the f t l f H

Th t g were as the weak nd small

When Th ldom her d ep d ag net trolled

And Ru n at one drau ht took all

Beca se th m ghty w k He w ou ht

Ga st Pari who so sore transgressed

I b nd I bow in solemn th ught

To Zeu the God of Host and Guest

Lo g t me he bent his bow r ped

A r d m not that deals no scars

Of feeble length ro erhead

Ranging amo g the u t oubled stars.

Now may men say
Zeus smote them from the deed
On to the doom so plain God s footprints lead
Thou canst not miss thy way
Now shines the event
His rescript graven in its accomplishment

There is a place
Inviolably fair
There is a Shrine thou shalt not enter there
Thrones the Immaculate Grace
Tush! Enter tread it down quoth one unwise
What list the Gods your lovely Sanctities?

Blasphemer! Shall not Death
Death by the Sword of God
Still the bold heart and stop the violent breath?
Have not the bloody feet of Havoc trod
Those marble mansions in the dust
Where Glory swelled and overflowed
Beyond the comely Mean and just?
Oh give me Wisdom with such Wealth in store
As I may safely hold I will not ask for more

He hath no ramp where he may turn
That drunkenly in mere despite
And wanton pride the seat of Justice stern
Even to the grunsel edge eterne
Dings down and tramples out of sight

To force the plot
That her dam Death hath hatched
Temptation cometh that foul witch unmatched
Whoso resisteth not
Her dangerous lure
There is no herb of grace can work his cure
Nor any shift
To hide the gleaming woe
When that pale spot that did so faintly show
With ever widening rift
Of ruinous light
Glares to the gazing world malignly bright

Then as your pinchbeck brass
The ring of gold assays
The rub of doom with many a fateful pass
The black that specks his soul bewrays
Then is he judged and God is none
Will hear his prayer yea heaven lays
On all his friends the evil done
When in his hey-day chase a madcap boy
He hunts the gaudy bird that shall his realm destroy

Such was Childe Paris when he came
Upon a day with Sorrow rife
To the Atreidae s house and smutched their fame
Yea for fair welcome left foul shame
And stole away the wedded wife

She left her land in evil hour
On shore and ship grim war s deep hum
And desolation was the dower
She took with her to Ilium
When she went lightly through the gate
And broke the bond inviolate
And voices in the palace cried
Woe s thee high house! My princes woe!
Thou deep sunk bed whose down doth show
Where love locked limbs lay side by side!
And there were twain that nothing spake
But sat aloof in mute heart break
Of all their honour disarrayed
Mourning too deeply to upbraid
A phantom court a phantom king
The loveless ghost of Love longing
She beckons him yet she bids him come
Over the sea to Ilium
The fair the large limbed marbles to her lord
Are loveliness abhorred
This penury sans eyes love s soul made bright
The end of all delight

And then the dream bliss comes the lure
That bids us to her with a lie
Ah when we think our heaven secure
We are the fools of phantasy
The fleeting vision will not stay
Even in his arms it steals away
Featly on brisk obedient wings
That wait upon the paths of Sleep
These sorrows in the courts of kings
And worse like shadows cower and leap
Where the household altar burns
But there s a general sorrow yea
In every home all Hellas mourns
The mustering of the war array
Her time of heaviness is come
For them that sailed to Ilium
And there is much in the tragic years
To melt her heart and move her tears
Him whom they loved and bade go forth men know—
A living soul but oh
There cometh back to home and Hellas shore
His dust the arm he bore

Ares on foughten field sets up his scales
Bodies of slain men stark and cold
These are this merchant moneyer s bales
The which in faggot fires at Ilium turned
To finer dust than is the sifted gold
And worth more tears he sends
Back to the dead men s friends
For them that fell too light a freight
For them that mourn a grievous weight
All in a clay cold jar so civilly inurned

And they mourn them and praise them and sadly one saith
Ah what a soldier was this!
And he died nobly dealing death
And ever a mutter of surly breath—
For a woman that was not his

And so, with public sorrow blent,
Is hea d the voice of disc ntent
That lo ed ones perish and sad hearts pine
To n ht the wrongs of Atreu line.

And some there be f shapely limbs and tall
That com no more but l e beneath the wall,
There th y possess th land for wh ch they fought
Coffined in Ilium s earth that lo ed them not!

A people s oice on the deep note f wrong
Grates harshly it bec mes a curse
Nor shall Destruction tarry lo
It falls, as w th loud thunder leaps the levin.
Somethi remains behind of dark, ad erse
And night in ol ed nd I
Lust n f tbodi gly
A d thi bla k unq et mood
I call to mind m n deep i blood
Shall n t l e out their days, hid from the s ght of
Heaven.

Yea for a eason man s thoughts wax bold
And h dra th lawless breath
B t n th dark Furies f om Hell s hold
Chase nd chan his tinsel g ld
To the h lessness of death.

And th r s n help where dead men lie
G eat gl hath su h jeopard
Ze es gla ce scathes his l htning sears
The soaring peaks that touch th stars.

G me the ca f an ed I t
T be hailed Co q ero d light me not
B t let me er so fa f m F tune s fa ur fall
As l life s abject and my maste thrall.

1 R mour runs fast throu h e ery street,
As fir the tidings bl th
If tru — o d in d c it—
Wh e is th man that knoweth?

2 Oh h so f nd in w t so lam
Th t kindli thro gh h m fla hes
N t, that gu t can fan to flame
An th t ns t shes?

3 All fair that takes woman ye
A b eath—a park—sh blazes
B t swift d passing sw ft, t d e
Th glory Woma pr ses.

Choru Le der Soon shall we know this torch
ra e these relays
Of b ck ing b and a d rallies of red fi e,
If they be t l ke th stuff of d eams
Del ght comes dazzl ng t d lud o se se.
A h ld ha ten h ther from th h
All bra hed bout with li boughs. The dry
And d ou hty d t mire s tw bo si te tells
H hath oice his messag b ll or eat
In flame with smoke of fire from hill top pines
B t either cry aloud our joy s increase
Or else—but I am out of love with words
That co trad ct our hopes. May this fair show
F nd fair addition and who wills not so,
But for his country s ruin maketh suit
Of his misprision reap the bitter fruit

Enter a HERALD

Herald O parent earth! Sweet Argos! Past are
the years,
Ten weary years—dawn breaks—and I am home
Some hopes have parted since but th s hope holds
I never thou ht to have in this Arg ve earth
A fathom of g ound to be my wished f r gra e.
A blessin on thee earth on thee br ght sun
And Zeus, our H h Lord and the Pythian King
No m ore to loose on us his arrow blasts.
Wast wroth en u h along Scamander s bank
N w be our Sa our our Phys cian be
Kingly Apollo! Greeti gs to the Tw lve
G eat Gathering-Gods! To Hermes my Defence
Herald of Heaven whom earthly heralds worship
Heroes, whose blessing h lp our settin forth
Rec e these remnant ranks, the spea hath spared!
And you high house of kings, halls ever dear
M jestic thrones, Godheads the sun salutes,
If in old time returning majesty
Y ur br ht looks graced beam now on a royal man
After lon years resto ed Day after n ht
To you to us and all in presenc here
Comes A amem on K ng Oh greet him well—
F r t becomes you w ll—that hewed down Troy
W th the g eat cross axe of Justice-dealing Zeus
Broke up her soil and wasted all her seed
S ch grie ous bo dage fa tened on Tr y s neck
Cometh the Ki old Atreus son first born
A happy man! Of all m n now ali e
Most wo thy to be had n ho r Not
Lord Paris nor the guilty city dare
Boast t ey dealt us mea u e m re bountiful
Th e requited unto them w th tears
J d ed guilty both of rape and larceny
H s spoil is forfeit he hath harvested
Th total ruin f his father s house
So P iam so s pay twofold for h s crimes.

Ch Joy to thee h rald f the Achaean host!

H My joy is at the full now let me d e
I ll n t complain t th Gods, death comes too soon

Ch I see how tis with thee lo e of thy land
P ed sore exerciser of thy heart

H So so e, that now mi e eyes are wet with tears
In joy s re ulsion

Ch Then twa a sweet distemper

H W t so sweet? You must expo nd m that
O I hall ne er master it

Ch 'Twas lo e
F lov lo f lon ing

He You would say
That ll your heart went w th th rmy ll
Our thou hts we e tu ned towards h me

Ch Ay oftent mes
I g oaned aloud f r him disqui tude.

He But why so ill at ease? Why such black thoughts
About the war?
Ch Pardon me I have found
Long since silence lays balm to a bruised heart
He Why the princes gone were there ill doers here
Ye stood in dread of?
Ch In so much that now—
Said ye not so?— twere joy to die
He In truth
We have done well but take it all in all
A man may say that as the years went by
We had our good times and our bad times Who
Except the Gods lives griefless all his days?
Our sorry lodging and our seldom rest—
And we lay hard—with all our miseries
Would furnish forth a tale—why is there aught
Costs men a groan we knew not every day?
These were sea hardships but twas worse ashore
There we must lie down under enemy walls
The sky dropped rain the earth did ceaselessly
Distil from the low lying fields her damps
And rotting mildews drenching our coats of hair
Which soon grew verminous Or what of winter
That froze the birds so perishingly cold
It came from Ida blanketed in snow?
Or the hot months when on his noon day bed
Windless and waveless sank the swooning sea?
Why moan all this? Tis past and for the dead
Is past the need ever to rise again
Or why tell o er th count of thos cut off
Or call to mind that to survive is still
To live obnoxious to calamity?
Farewell a long farewell to all misfortune!
For us the remnant of the Argive power
Gain conquers and no grief that good outweighs
Therefore in this bright sun over broad seas
And the wide earth flying on wings of Fame
Well may we make our boast Takers of Troy
Hard won but won at last the Argive power
To the Gods of Hellas nailed these trophies up
To be the glory of their temples old
Then shall men hear and sing our country s laud
And her great captains and extol the grace
Of Zeus that wrought these things Sir I have done
Ch This wins me I deny no more for age
Still leaves us youth enough to learn
Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA
But this
Touches the house and Clytæmnestra most
Though its largesse withal enriches me
Cl Oh ages since I raised my jubilant shout
When the first fiery messenger of night
Told Ilium was taken and her stones
Rased ruined and removed And one of you
Did gird m then saying *Dost think Troy sacked*
Because men set a match to wood?—By God
A woman s heart is lightly lifted up
So they supposed me crazed and still I made
Oblation and a general cry of joy—
Most womanly!—rent the air and in the shrines
They fed sweet spices to the hungry flame
And now I will not hear thee more at large
I shall know all from the king s lips There s much
Asks swift despatch that my most sacred lord
May have noblest of welcomes Sweet the day
Sweetest of all days in a woman s life
When for her husband she flings wide the gates
And he comes back from service saved by God!
Take back this message that he come with speed
For his land loves him tell him he will find
A true wife waiting when he comes as true
As her he left the watch dog of his house
Loyal to him but savage to his foes
In nothing changed one that has broke no seal
Nor known delight in other s arms nor felt
The breath of censure more than she has dipped
Cold steel in blood *Exit*
He Strange how she boasts! Is t not
Though charged with truth and something over charged
Scarce decent in a high born lady s mouth?
Ch Well she has done you heard her and I think
You understood her noble rhetoric
For wise interpreters But tell me herald
Comes Menelaus with you? Is he safe
Our realm s dear majesty?
He What s fair and false
Is soon enjoyed tis fruit that will not keep
Ch I would give much couldst thou speak fair and true
For true and fair dissevered and at strife
The secret is soon out
He Why not to glose
And lie to thee we have no trace at all
Of the man or the ship whereon he sailed
Ch Alack
And did he put to sea from Ilium
In sight of all? Or caught in the track of storm
That jeopardied the fleet part company?
He Dextrously thou aimst indeed you sum great grief
In little space
Ch And other mariners—
Do they report him dead or living?
He None
Knows nor can certainly resolve our doubts
Save Helios the nurturer of all life
Through the vast world
Ch Tell me how rose the storm
And how it ended with the wrath of Heaven?
He So fair a day we must not with foul news
Distain we owe the Gods far other ser i e
No when with looks abhorred a herald brings
Calamitous news of armies overthrown
When the general heart aches with one wound and each
Bleeds for his own by thousands made accursed
Scourged from their homes by Ares double lash
Two handed havoc couplings of bloody death
Well may he sing Erinys Song poor man
Bowed down to earth neath that sore load But when

All s well, and h comes bringing joyful news
T a land that maketh merr well at ease
How mix th es good and ill, speak of this storm
That, not without Hea en s wrath smote the
Achaeans?
W ter and Fire fo gat their anc ent quarrel
And sware a leagu together and to pro e
How well they kept it brake the Ar e power
Upon ni ht there rose a mau hty sea
And presently the roarin Thracian gale
Dra e ship on ship Tossed by the h rned t phoon,
W th spray of salt sea sleet and drumming rain
In that ild pipin they w r lost t ew
And, hen the b ght sun rose the A gea wa e
Was lilied er w th drowned men nd wreck of
ships.
But ou taut hull a Power pri ly
Con eyed away or i terceded f r us.
A God t as, no man, that took the helm
Fortune, our Sa iour stat ned her abou d
Of gra e so that at anchor n th swell
W sh pped no seas no swung pon the rocks.
And from the wat ry ab ss f Death
Preserved incredul us of ou good hap
I th white dawn sad food fo th u ht we found
So sudden was the blow our men so pent
Our fleet so shattered And f any of them
Is ali e to-d y certes, they gi u up
For lost as thi k them
H pe for the best
And t of Men laus your first thou ht
Must be that he is so d tressed Ho beit
If any ray f th sun bri n te of him
H leaf unwithered and hi ey un losed
The is a h pe that by som artifi
Of Zeus, ot mi ded et to dest his house
H ma om home ear N w u ha e heard
My story d ma warrant ll is true. *Exit*

Chorus

T ll m wh t wa ould frame
So un run l h nam ?
Was t t on w annot see
Proph t f F turit ?
Did n t F te his to gu spire
Calling n her nam g d
He world nf nd world s desire,
Brid f B ttl H lena ?
H le A Hell was n h kiss
For ships nd m nd pol ties,
When from beh nd h mo ous eil
Sh sall ed forth th p ud full sail
And Lo dallying w nd blew fair
That f to earth born Zephy ba e
Th followed ft in full cry
As hounds and h t m n take th field
Of gala tr a fai ompany
That pressed thei suit w th lance and shield
Over th bl e, undimpled w e
Tha old not f h oar blad tra k,
Ha d pon Simois trand they dra e,
All over g with leafy wood

And she whose hands are red with blood
Eris, was master of the pack.

Wrath that can nor will remit
N thing of its purpose knit
Bonds that Ilium shall find
M r than kin and less than kind
And for an example lest
Men in a es y t unborn
Break the bread and foully scorn
Sanct ties twixt host and guest
Zeus, who guard th hearth and bed
Hath in a g r vi ted
Th m that led the merry din
Over bold to welcome in
With revel high and Hymen s strain
Sun of all the marriag kin
Bride and groom and bridal train.
But the tide of Fate had turned
Gainst Priam s city ere she learned
A new song of sadde measure
Marrying h r complai ng b eath
To the d g of d smal death
Where is neither lo nor pleasure
Then was P ris evil wed
When lon years he m urned her dead
And their blood wa on his head

Once on a t me there li ed a man a herd
A d h took home find n it motherless,
To be h foster ch ld all fan ed and furred
A l n-cub little ho ess.

Still wishful f the warm and m lky dug
It was ge tle bea t while t nd r yet
Mad fr e d with children th would kiss and hug
Th baby limbs, and twas the ld folks pet

Many a t me nd ft the wean bri ht-eyed
Like t a child in arms they carried
And when for meat the lion belly cried
'Tw uld cringe and fawn nd oax them to be fed

The t g ew up and from what race was *sprung*
P o ed when s rec mpe se fo care and keep
(Ra e let loose the folded flocks amon)
It made a suppe of th s lly sheep

Then wa the homestead soaked in blood and they
That dwelt th r mastered by this unmat hed ill
K ew th y had b ed a Mischief born to lay
A priest of Ha oc se t them by God s w ll.

When first she came to Ilium Town
The windless water s w tchery
Wa h rs a jewel in the Crown
Of Wealth that sparkles soft wa she
An eye to wound w th melting fire
The rose of ra ishin des r

But wea n n w an alte ed grac
Lov s swe solemnities she soured

In Priam s house a hated face
A curse with settled sorrow dowered
On Zeus the Guest God s word swift borne
Erinys that makes brides to mourn

I know how well the saying wears
Stricken in years but still held wise
That boundless Wealth is blest with heirs
And Grandeur not un hilded dies
Boon Fortune s bud and branch is she
The hungry hearted Misery

False doctrine though I stand alone
I hold that from one wicked deed
A countless family is sown
And as the parent so the seed
But Justice hands fair Fortune on
And godly sire hath goodly son

Yea that old beldame Pride
Who to her lustful side
Draws evil men anon or else anon
When Fate with hand of power
Beckons the destined hour
Brings forth young Pride her Mother s minion
Daughter of Darkness sabled hued
As the Tartarean pit for vengeance armed and thewed

A Power no stroke can fell
Nor stubborn warfare quell
A hag a goblin an unholy form
The Soul of hardihood
Swift to shed guiltless blood
Dark Angel of Destruction s whirling storm
She dances on the roofs of kings
And by her shape men know from what foul loins she springs

Oh in the smoky air
Of poor men s homes how fair
How like a star the lamp of Justice shines!
Justice that most approves
The faithful life that moves
In the fixed path her Providence assigns
And constant to that strict control
Forceful as Fate pursues the orbit of his soul

But where in Splendour s halls
Gold glitters on the walls
And on men s hands is filth and foul offence
With looks averse and cold
She quits the gates of gold
And hails the hut of humble Innocence
Wealth s coin of spurious die
Usurping Sovereignty
No image bears whereto she bends
She guides and governs all and all begun she ends

Enter AGAMEMNON *with* CASSANDRA *and his train seated in chariots*

Hail to thee monarch! Conqueror of Troy!
Offspring of Atreus! How shall I content
Thy spirit in thy triumph and thy joy?
Rise to the height of honour s argument

And yet a chastened gratulation give?
There are of rogues enough av and to spare,
Who in the shows of things are pleased to live,
And thrive on falsehood as their native air

There s little faith in man scarce one that breathes
But with misfortune will heave up a sigh
And yet the cruel sting sorrow unsheathes
Fore God his tender parts it comes not nigh

And other some be sure of this O king
Can simulate a joy they do not feel
Come with forced smiles and fulsome welcoming
And crafty faces cruel thoughts conceal

But him whose business is with droves and herds
The gipsy s arts can captivate no whit
Not easy duped with warrantable words
And protestations fair in water writ

Sir in all honesty when thou didst arm
In Helen s cause to save her launch thy ships
My portrait of thee lacked the Muses charm
And Wisdom s helm I said a madman grips

She doth consent thrice o er the wanton! Why
For her make sacrifice of heroes blood?
Now from the bottom of my heart I cry
Grief thou wast welcome since the end is good

Howbeit Time hath something yet to say
(Though now he clap a finger to his lip)
Touching this land when you were far away
Who well who ill discharged his stewardship

Agamemnon To Argos and her Gods let me speak first
Joint authors with me of our safe return
And of that justice I did execute
On Priam s city Not by the tongues of men
But by their deaths have the Gods judged our cause
Nor haltingly twixt two opinions cast
For Ilium s overthrow their suffrages
Into the urn of blood the other Hope
Drew nigh but not a pebble dropped And now
Her smoke discovereth her death s whirlblasts live
Her ashes dying with her gasp her wealth
In unctuous evanishings away
Long should our memory be and large our thanks
To Heaven for humbled pride and rape revenged
A kingdom for a wench ground up and small
Whenas the broody horse hatched out her young
Our basilisk our Argive bucklermen
Vaulting to earth what time the Pleiads sank
And Argos Lion ravening for meat

Leapt tower and wall, and lapped a belly ful
Of tyrant blood
So ha e I opened me
Unto the God And yet I call your words
To mind your counsel squares w th my own thoughts.
How rare it is n nature when a man
Can spare his friend f he sta ds well with Fortune
Ungrudging honour! Nay himself g ows s ck
I his estate jeal usy lays to his hea t
A poison that can make his burden double
H hath his own griefs, yet must hea e m e sighs
T see a nei hbour happy! Ah I k w
That which I speak I am too well acquaint
W th f endship s glass, the reflex of a shadow
I mea my professed friends. There was not one
Except Odysseus, the most loth t sail
That like horse f mettle pulled h s we ght
And hethe he be dead or ali e God kn ws.
Enou h of this. We purpose p esently
T call a Council touching th stat f the realm
And th service of the Gods What sound we shall
T ke measures t perpetuat but wh e
The sneed f phys n w shall t ll kindness
Use ca ters o the knife t ll w ha rid
Th land of mischief
Now I t m pass w thin
And in my high hous mun wn hearth stretch out
My ri ht hand to th Gods, that sent me forth
And b ought me safely h m So ctory
That f llowed n my tra n ttend me still.
CLYTEMN TR comes to meet him
Cl Good citiz s, r Arg e st gn ory
I think shame t speak f th dear lo e
I bea my lord Ou blushes wea ot well
Th pal w th time and I eed l ttle schoolin
To t ll ou life to me as weari ness
Those years wh n he belegu red Ilium.
Me l to sit t home with ut h r l rd
Is f a woma t know fearful so row
Scar hath o ra k ot ed kill j y er ed his news
Tha e mes his f llow lam n g fa wors
A f th rould f ma hood wh e he stands,
Had g tt w nds as ma R mou d g ed
Cha el t be th cond t f h s blood
And h lp t home he wer as f ll f h les
As, th your lea a et H d he but d ed
As fren me s tongues repo ted him
Anoth t ple bod ed Gery
Three looks f ea th clay— t t p too deep
And talk f und trewm nts—three fa r looks
Of cla f c ld—thr ce dead
And b ried handsom ly as ma y t mes—
Con ei hi bou t—th ce pses, gra ap ecel
W ll, b t these rabbed t mours mad m mad
And many t mes th noose wa round my eck
Had m peopl m ch against my will,
L t ed th k t A d th will tell you why
When looked f most Orestes t not he
Lord f our pl hted lo es to h m unpaw ed
You must not think it strange. Your sworn ally
Strophius the Phocian hath charged him with
The nurture of the child foreshadowing
A double jeopardy yours before Ilium
And here lest many throated Anarchy
Should patch a plot s nce tis a ice in nature
To trample down the fallen underfoot.
Thi wa hi argument and I belie e
Honestly urged For me the fount of weep ng
H th long run dry and there s no drop left Oh!
These eyes, late watchers by the lamp that burned
For thee but thou kept st not thy tryst are sore
With all the tears they shed thinking f thee
How often from my sleep d d the thin hum
And th esh of buzzing gnat rouse me! I dreamed
Mo e so rows for thy sake than Time that played
The wanton with me reckoned minutes while
I sl pt All this ha e I g ne through and now
Ca e free I hail our mastiff of the fold
Our ship s great mainstay p llar pedestalled
To bear a soarin roof up o ly son
Landfall to sailors out of hope of land!
These are th great add ti ns of h s worth!
And I pray God tis no offen e to Hea en
To make th m heard We ha e had many sorrows,
And would pro oke no mo e
Dear Hea t c me down
Step from thy car b t not n the bare ground
Thy foot that desolated Ilium
Thou oyal man must ne er stoop so low!
Spread your rich stuffs bef re him gi ls make haste!
That he may walk the purple pa ed way
Wher Justice leads him to his und eamed home.
My sleepless care shall manage all the rest
As Justic and the Heavenly Will appro e.

Ag Off p ing of Leda keeper of my house
Y u match y ur much speech to my abse ce both
Are som thi g lo g the rather that fine wo ds
Com best from others lips. Woman me not
No like an east rn sla e g o el befo e me
With y ur wide mo thed e tra agant e claim.
Away with all these strewm nts! Pave for me
No highway of ffenc ! What can we m re
When we w uld d ify the deathless Gods!
But Ma t walk these sacramental splendours
It likes m not and I do fear t N
H no m a the mo tal thi g I am
N t s God! A foot-cloth that will pass
But thi k h will will sound n the to gues of m n
These eelings of the precincts! God s best gift
I r h fr e from w cked thoughts call no man
Happy t ll his co tented clay is cold
Now I h e told thee how I mean to act
And keep my c nsc enc easy
Cl Tell me this,
And peak thy mind to m
Ag My mind s made p
I ll not rase out min own decree.
Cl Would t thou,
Faced w th some fearful jeopardy ha e made

A vow to Heaven to do what now I ask thee?
Ag If some wise doctor had prescribed the rite
I would have vowed to do it
Cl What dost thou think
Priam had done if Priam had achieved
The victory that s thine?
Ag Oh he had trod
Your sacrilegious purples
Cl Then fear not thou
Man s censure
Ag In the general voice resides
A power not to be contemned
Cl *Good lack!*
Unenvied never yet was fortunate!
Ag This is a war of words a woman s war
And yet a woman should not take delight
In battle
Cl Tis a virtue that becomes
Glory in his triumphant hour to yield
Ag *While we stand here at odds* wilt thou
pretend
Thou carest for a victory so won?
Cl Nay but thou shalt indulge me thy consent
Leaves thee my master still
Ag Have thine own way
Since nothing else contents thee One of you
Undo these latchets Hark ye loose me quick
These leathern underlings and when I set
My foot on yon sea purples let no eye
Throw me a dart of jealousy from far!
I am heartily ashamed to waste my stuff
Walking on wealth and woof good money buys
But I ll waste no more words Lead in the lady
Be tender with her for the Gods above
Look gently down when earthly power is kind
None loves the bondman s yoke and she s the
flower
Of all our spoils the army s gift a part
Of my great train Now I ll contend no longer
Let me pass on under my palace roof
Treading your purples
He descends from his chariot
Cl There s the wide sea
and who
Shall drain it dry? Purple! There s more of it
In Mediterranean waves for ever fresh
Worth silver ounces the right juice to wring
Your royal robes withal And God be thanked
We ve plenty of them within we do not know
What tis to lack I would have vowed to tread
Raiment in heaps if oracles had bid me
When I was at my wits end to contrive
How to win back the half of mine own heart!

Now springs the root to life the climbing leaf
Tile high against Dog Sirius spreads a shade!
And in thy home coming our weather wise
Winter reads signs of warm days fully come
Yet in God s wine press when the unripe grape
Is trampled out into the blood red wine
Then for the perfect man about the house
There comes a wintry coolness to his cheek

Zeus Zeus Perfecter perfect now my prayer
And of Thine own high will be Perfecter!
AGAMEMNON *and* CLYTÆMNESTRA *enter the Palace*

Chorus

Spirit of Fear and all Unrest
Will thy wings never tire?
Song that waitest no man s hest
Nor askest any hire

Why this prophetic burden keep?
What Ghost no power can lay
Not like the cloudy shapes of Sleep
Heaved with a breath away

Haunts me with evermore despair —
Sad phantom still unflown
And Courage high no more speaks fair
Lord of my bosom s throne?

The laggard years have told their sum
The cables are outworn
Since to beleaguer Ilium
Went up the host sea borne

And now I see that host s return
By witness of these eyes
Yet in my hand is no cithern
My soul accompanies

The song that Angry Spirits sing
The dirge of Vengeance dread
My confidence hath taken wing
And my dear hope is dead

But still gainst hope my prayer I press
The event may yet belie
My fears and bring to nothingness
My soul s dark prophecy

Goodman Health for his great train
Findeth his bounds too small
For the lazar house of Neighbour Pain
Leaneth against his wall

Though calm the winds and smooth the wake
And Fortune s ship sail free
There are Rocks she shall strike where no seas break
There are shoals of Misery

Sailor be ware! Be wise!
Out of her deep hold heave
Of her rich merchandise
With rope and block and sheave

So you shall save your craft
Your ship shall founder not
Though she be of great draught
And perilously fraught

For the bounty of Zeus shall repair
The ravage of yesterday

And a season s tilth with the furrowing share
 Chase Famine and Want away

But th blood of life once shed
 Shall come to no man s call.
He that could raise the dead
 And the flocking Shadows all

Did not Zeus stop his breath
 And bring him t his pause
Lest wh would heal th wound of death
 Strik at Eternal Laws?

Oh we re straitened sore
 If b strict rule di pensed
Jeal us of less or m re.
 Hea en s libert es be fenced

What wish dare m rtal frame?
 Else had my hot heart flung
All out and put to hame
 This inexpressi t ngue.

Now I n hope to unwind
 The clew of Heart s dear
To think is pai when thought is blind
 The sm ke of a soul o fi e.

Enter C YTÆM E TRA.

Cl How now Cassandra? I must hav thee too
G ti since Zeu —oh su l *not n wrath!*
Hath mad the on f us a perged with all
Our l tral prinklings, at ou household altar
Stood i thy place w th th bo dw m n.
St p fr m thy wag then and be n t p oud
Alcm na s so thou k w t was sold f r a price
A d did nd r to eat la e ba l y bread
H that must call Wealth lord may bless his stars
When us f ho urabl antiquit
Wh look f nothi g a d reap fluence
Ar rue mast rs tand upon no law
B t h re thou shalt be used a use presc bes.
 Ch Sl wait thin answer be ng ca ht and
  ca ed
I ki f thou mean st to y ld but it may be,
Tha lt t
 Cl Speaks she some barbarous babble
  m t
Som h ttert g swall w talk that sh s so sl w
T t ke my meaning?
 Ch Lady twere best submit
Sh ff rs all that th e tr *outy*
Gi es room to h pe f lea e thy wagg n throne,
And follow he poo princess.
 Cl While he tucks
F t at my door I wa t my p ecious time
Th dumb bea t tand abo t th c ntral hearth
W t n th kn f nd th to be g eat sla gh ter
Meet f boon vouchsafed bey *d o* h pe
If k m h lt th w h bea a w r
Come, m ess, f yo a ot mu de G ek
Make you hand talk and do your ja goning

 Ch One should interpret for her she looks wild
A hunted deer new t ken in the toils.
 Cl Mad sirrah mad and listening to her own
Co tra ous heart a captive newly caught
Champing the b t until her puny stren th
She foam away in blood Enough of this
I ll waste no more words to be so d sdained
Exit

 Ch My heart s too full of p ty to be wroth.
Sad lady lea e thy car there is no way
But this, c me down and take thy yoke upon thee.
 Cassandra
 Woe! Woe! Woe!
 Apollo! Apollo!
 Ch Why dost thou mourn for Loxias? Is he
Natured like us to ask a thr nody?
 Ca Woe! Woe! Woe!
 Apollo! Apollo!
 Ch Again! She doth affro t the God not so
Must we draw n gh him wailing wailing woe
 Ca Apollo! Apoll ! God of the great
W d ways of the w rl ! my path is ma le strait!
Not tw ce shall I sh n thee my Foe a d my Fate!
 Ch Ha! Her own gri f s her theme th e God
  gi en Mind
Bondage can break not no nor fetters bind!
 Ca Apollo! Apollo! God of the Ways,
What road is th s, thou da ke er f my days?
What h use that bend on me so ter a gaze?
 Ch Oh this i the Atreidæ ro al home
Ay truly to th ir h gh hou e thou art come
 Ca Horribl d ngeon! House of S !
These stones hav secrets, drenched in blood of
  kin!
Out human shambles, st fli g halls,
The red ra n trickling d wn your walls!
 Ch A huntress hound! Yea and by all that s ill
I fear this fi d w ll follow to a kill!
 Ca I k w it by this wailing cry
These shr k of slaughtered infancy
T en from thei dam and roa t w th fire,
Set in a dish served up fo their sire!
 Ch We know thou art a soothsayer natheless,
It skills not ow we seek no p ophetess.
 Ca God what s conspiring here? What new
And nameless h r c m th i to iew
To o e top and pale w th bolder hu
Ghosts of ld c im that walk this bloody stage
M king Lo e w ep and wring he a gushed hands?
The no phy ic ca th s ache assuage
A d fr m th woe far off ll succou tands
 Ch Oh, th y a e published sorr w s, g fs that
  ha e b n
B t I kn w not hat these da k sayings mean
 Ca Mise eant what make you the e? Why dost
  thou brim
Yon cauld o f thy lord? On b east and limb
The ool stream glitt r Ah m ne yes grow dim
The d eadful cons mmat th sw ft lose,
Makes my l ps dumb a d stops my breath
With u h a ceaseless hail f sa g bl ws
A wh te a m flashes, doubling death on death

Ch This thick occulted darkness grows more dense
Riddles and runes confounding sound and s nse!
Ca Oh horrible!
What s this? A net as bottomless as hell?
A net—a snare—ha! And what else is she
That wound him in her arms in love s embrace
And now conspires to murder him! Dogs of the chase
Devils still hungry for the blood of Atreus race
Over the hideous rite shout shout with jubilee!
Ch What s this Avenger thou bidd st shriek
Within the house? Night sinks
Upon my soul to hear thee faint and weak
Drop by drop the slow blood shrinks
Back to my heart to sickly pallor blenched
So pales some fallen warrior his life s ray
Low down the sky in sallow sunset quenched
Then with swift stride comes Death with the dying day
Ca (*With a piercing shriek*) Ah h h h! look! look! Keep
The Bull from the Cow! Hell-dark and deep
As death her horn she strikes and he is caught
Caught in his long robe—falling—falling—dead
In the warm bath with murder brimming red!
Oh what a tale is here! A damnèd plot
With bloody treason bubbling in the pot!
Ch I have small skill in oracles
But something evil I divine
And troth who ever heard that he who mells
With them learnt aught of good at grot or shrine?
No all the answers prophet ever framed
All his high sounding syllables when the seer
Speaks with the Voice of God are evil aimed
To exercise us in a holy fear
Ca O death! O doom! Mine own
In the cursed cauldron thrown!
Wherefore hast brought me here! Ah well I know
I am to follow whither he must go
Ch Thou art crazed on gusts of God sent madness borne!
Thyself the theme of thy sad ecstasy!
There is nor law nor measure in thy strain
Like the brown nightingale that still doth mourn
As if song sought but could not find relief
Itys—Itys —a never ending cry
Her life of sorrow telling o er again
In her undying bower of fadeless grief
Ca Ah happy nightingale!
Sweet singer little frail
Form God gave wings to—sweet to live—sans tears!
For me the edge of doom! How fast it nears!
Ch Whence come these Heaven sent transports whence come they?
The meaning of thine anguish none of us knows
Wherefore dost body forth in melody
These terrors that thou can st not put away?
These notes they pierce they are exceeding shrill
And bodingly thy passionate utterance flows
Who made so strait thy path of prophecy
And taught thy tongue to utter only ill?

Ca Wooing of Paris thou hast won us woe!
Wedding of Paris thou hast made us weep!
Native Scamander where thy waters flow
I waxed to womanhood
Now by Acherontian gorges deep
Or where Cocytus pours his wailing flood
My boding heart foretells
I presently shall chant my oracles
Ch Oh what is this dark meaning leaps to light?
A child could understand thee thy keen pangs
Stab through and through me like the venomous bite
Of serpent s tooth when he fleshes his fangs
And I am broken by the wailing cry
So passing piteous is thine agony
Ca Oh lost lost labour! Low the city lies
A wreck a ruin rased are tower and wall
Vainly my father lavished sacrifice
With holocausts of kine
Poor pastoral beasts that nothing stayed her fall!
Oh heart of flame Oh fiery heart of mine
Go burn among the dead!
I come—I come—for me the net is spread
Ch Still harping on that chord of coming fate!
An Evil Spirit bidding thee despair
Sweeps through thy soul with insupportable weight
And calls from thee this wild and wailful air
Sorrow and Death making one melody
And oh I know not what the end shall be!
Ca Now shall mine oracle no more look forth
Out of a dim veil like new wedded bride
But put on brightness as a wind that blows
Towards the sun s uprising gainst the light
Hurl like a hissing wave a horror far
Huger than this I ll riddle you no more
Ye shall take up the chase and bear me out
Whilst I hark back upon the scent of crime
Oh there are music makers in this house
That quit it never a symphonious Quire
Yet ill to hear for evil is their theme
Being in drink the more to make them bold
They will not budge these Revellers of the race
Of Furies they sit late their drunken rouse
The original sin ay that incestuous beast
Mounted on lust that trampled his brother s bed
Went that shaft wide or have I struck the deer?
Or am I but a lying prophetess
That raps at street doors gabbling as she goes?
Now give me the assurance of your oaths
I know the iniquity of this ancient house
Ch What s in an oath though in all honour sworn
To help or heal? But I do marvel much
That bred beyond the seas thou can st dis ourse
Of foreign horrors alien to thy blood
As if thou hadst stood by
Ca Prophet Apollo
Ordained me to this office
Ch Is t not true
He loved thee though a God?
Ca There was a time
When I had blushed to own it

Ca. We are nice
When Fortune's kind, 'tis nothing singular
Ca. He was a stormy wooer and wrought hard
To win me.
Ch. Was it even so And came ye then
As is the way of love to getting children?
Ca. I did consent with Loxias and broke
My promise.
Ch. Hadst thou then the divine gift
Of prophecy?
Ca. Even then I told my people
All that they had to suffer
Ch. How couldst thou scape
The wrath of Loxias?
Ca. This was my doom
That none to whom I spake believed on me.
Ch. But we have heard thee speak and we believe
Thy words are truth.
Ca. Ah h,—God! Again
The pang—the rocking blast—the reeling brain
And the clear vision through the pain!
Look there! They sit—they have come home to roost
These babes, the sorry semblance of sick dreams!
Dead children, dead—but bereft by their own kin!
Their hands are full of meat their mess their own
Bowels and inward parts out on the sight!
The lamentable dish—their father supped!
For this, I tell you, one hath planned revenge
The craven lion tumbling in his bed
To keep it warm, woe's me, till he should come
Who is my master—oh a slave am I!
The Sea-king Ravisher of Ilium,
Knows not her false and slavering tongue, thrust out,
Lewd bitch, to lick and fawn and smile and be
The secret soul of unforgiven blight!
Dare it, She-devil! Unsex thyself, and be
His murderess! O monster bloody monster
Thou hast no name! Thou asp, Amphisbaena,
Scylla of the Rocks, that is the seaman's grave!
Hell's Mother Bacchant, owing truceless war
Against thine own! Deep in all guilt how loud
She shouted (as when the tide of battle turns)
Seeming to joy for her lord's home-coming!
Believe me or believe not, 'tis all one.
What is to be will come a little while
And you shall see it. Then you'll pity me
And say that I was a true prophetess.
Ch. The babes flesh served for the Thyestean feast
I know and shudder at the dreadful tale
I understand and naked but for the told
But as for all the rest my thoughts run wild
Clean from the course.
Ca. I tell thee thou shalt see
The death of Agamemnon.
Ch. Peace! Oh, peace!
Fair words, unhappy lady!
Ca. There is no art
Can mend my speech.
Ch. Not, if the thing must be
But God forbid.
Ca. Thou makest prayer to God
But they make ready to kill.
Ch. Name me the man!
Ca. Thou dost not understand me
Ch. Troth I know
No way at all to compass the king's death.
Ca. And yet I speak good Greek, your tongue I know
Too well.
Ch. So doth the Pythian oracle,
Yet are his divinations wondrous dark.
Ca. Oh, misery!
I burn! I burn! I am on fire with thee,
Apollo! Wolf Slayer! Woe is me!
The lioness that wantoned with the wolf,
The kingly lion being from her side
Shall take away my life for she hath sworn
To add my wages to the hell broth she
Brews while she whets a dagger for her lord
Means in my blood to pay my coming here.
Why do I wear this motley? Why these wands?
These wreaths about my neck for prophecy?
Your death for mine idle gauds! To Hell with you,
And I will follow after! Go, make rich
Another with damnation! Look 'tis Apollo
Strips off my godly robes! I am to him
A spectacle grinned on by friends and foes.
They called me stroller beggar mountebank,
Poor drab, poor half-dead starveling evil names
And ill to bear! But that was not enough
The prophet who made me a prophetess
Has brought me here to die a violent death!
And for my father's altar waits for me
The block warm reeking with the blood of him
That's butchered first! But we'll not die for nought
We too shall have our champion, the child
For mother's murder born and sire's revenge.
A fugitive a wanderer, outlaw he
To crown this fatal pyramid of woe
Shall surely come! The Gods have sworn an oath
His father's curse shall bring him back again!
Why do I shrink? Why do I wail? Since I
Have seen what hath befallen Ilium,
And Ilium's captors come to this bad end
By the judgement of the Gods, I will go in
And meet my death. Ye Gates of Hell I greet ye!
Pray God that I may get a mortal stroke
Without a struggle dying easily
A spurt of blood and then these eyes fast-closed.
Ch. Lady of many sorrows, and in much
Most wise thou hast discoursed at length but if
Thou hast indeed foreknowledge of thy death
How canst thou walk as boldly to the grave
As goes to the altar the God-driven ox?
Ca. Sirs, I must die delay can stead me not.
Ch. Yet death deferred is best.
Ca. My hour is come
To fly would nothing profit me.
Ch. Thou hast
A patient and a valiant spirit.
Ca. You praise
Not as men praise the happy

Ch Yet to die
Nobly is to have honour among men
Ca Oh father father I am woe for thee
And all thy noble children
She moves to the door of the palace but recoils
Ch Ha!
Why dost thou start? What terror waves thee back?
Ca Foh! Foh!
Ch What s this offends thy nostrils? Or is t the mind
That s sick with fear?
Ca Pah! The house smells of blood
Ch Nay nay it is the smell of sacrifice
Ca It reeks like an open grave
Ch No Syrian nard
God wot!
Ca Hush! I ll go in and there too I ll
Wail for my death and Agamemnon s what
I had of life must be sufficient for me
O Sirs! Alack!
I am no bird that shrills a wild alarm
Scared at a bush Bear witness what I am
Hereafter when for this my death shall die
Another of my sex another man
For one most woefully ill mated fall
And this I ask you on the edge of death
Ch Oh! for thy doom foretold I am struck to the heart!
Ca But one word more or rather my last word
The dirge of mine own death I pray the sun
Now in this last of light that my avengers
Pay home upon mine enemies the death
I die—a slave despatched with one swift blow!
She enters the palace
Ch Oh state of man! Thy happiness is but
The pencilling of a shadow —Misery
With a wet sponge wipes out the picture! Ay
And this is the more pitiable by far

Oh maw and ravin of Prosperity!
Hunger that lives of men can never appease!
There s none stands guard o er gorgeous palaces
Bidding thee enter not neither draw nigh!

Here is a man the Gods in bliss alway
Gave Priam s Town for spoil and he hath come
With divine honours back to his own home
But if for blood he shed not he must pay

If for old crimes he presently must die
That of death s glory not a beam be shorn
Who that hath ears to hear can boast him born
Under a star of scatheless destiny?
Ag (*Within the palace*) Oh I am wounded with a mortal wound!
Ch Hush! Who is he that crieth out? Who shrieks
Wounded unto the death?
Ag Again! O God!
Ch Now by the crying of the king I know
The deed is done but what shall we do? Oh
1
Summon the citizens!
2 Break in! Break in!
And put to proof this corrigible sin
At the sword s point!
3 There thou and I are one
What is to do let it be quickly done
4 It leaps to light now is their signal flown
This flourish sets oppression on its throne
5 Yes for while we are trifling with the time
Procrastination the armed heel of Crime
Treads under neither doth their sword hand sleep!
6 My wit is out who dares the dangerous leap
Let him advise
7 Ay truly that s well said
I have no art with words to raise the dead
8 Are we for the sake of a few sorry years
To crook the knee before these murderers?
Are they that shame the house to lead us?
9 No!
Better lie down in death than stoop so low!
Death is not half so curst as tyranny
10 Here s too much haste because we heard a cry
Are we to argue that the king is slain?
11 You re in the right on t! Give not wrath the rein
Until thou hast assurance of the deed
Hasard surmise and certitude are twain
12 Why then as most would have it let s proceed
And first ere fears to acted folly run
We ll know what hath befallen Atreus son
The scene opens and discloses CLYTÆMNESTRA *standing over the bodies of* AGAMEMNON *and* CASSANDRA
Cl If I spoke much in terms of policy
Why should I scruple to recant them now?
If Love be a close traitor shall not Hate
Dissemble too environing her prey
In toils too high for Desperation s leap?
This is the finish of an ancient quarrel,
Long brooded and late come but come at last.
I stand upon mine act—yea where I struck.
And I confess it I did use such craft
He could nor fly nor fend him against death
I caught him in a net as men catch fish
No room no rat hole in his loopless robe
I struck him twice and once and twice he groaned
He doubled up his limbs and where he dropped
I struck him the third time and with that stroke
Committed him to Zeus that keeps the dead!
Then he lay still and gasped away his life
And belching forth a stinging blast of blood
Spattered me with a shower of gory dew
And I was blithe as with the balm of Heaven
The young corn in the birth time of the ear
Wherefore my very worshipful good masters
Be merry an it like you—I exult!
Would you a decent draught to drench his corpse
Tis ready for him and we ll stint no drop
The bowl he filled with sorrow in his house
Now he s come home he shall suck out to the dregs.
Ch Inhuman monster! Oh thou wicked tongue
Wilt thou insult o er thy murdered lord!
Cl I am no fool you cannot touch me there
This shakes me not I do but tell you that

You know already. Whether you praise or blame
Matters no jot. Look! This is Agamemnon
My sometime husband. Here's the hand that
    hewed him
Was it not well done? Is it not a masterpiece
Of Justice? Ay, admire it how you will.
This is the fashion of it.
  Ch. Woman, hast eaten some evil root,
Or brewed thee drink of the bubbling sea,
That thou hast nerved thee for this rite?
A thousand voices shall hiss and hoot,
A thousand curses thy soul shall blight,
For the deed thou hast done this day!
Thou hast cut off, cast down, and thou shalt be
Thyself castaway
Abhorred, exorcised, excommunicate
A monster loaded with the people's hate.
  Cl. Now in the name of Justice thou hurlest down
Damnation and abhorrence on my head
But he in deed was, durst cast no stone at him,
Who with no more concern than for a beast
Taken and slaughtered from a thousand flocks,
Slew his own child, the darling of my womb,
For a charm against the Thracian blow
Oughtest not thou rather for his wicked deed
To have thrust him forth? You hear what I have
    done,
And scowl, thou truculent justicer! I'll tell you
This I am ready for your threats on equal odds
But we'll try quits or if you better me,
Do you bear rule, but if that is not God's way
Late learner though thou art, I'll teach thee wisdom.
  Ch. Thou boastest much and art great to devise
But when I see thee in thy fury ta...
When thy heart is plunging fount of blood,
I think what foul to thy blazing eyes
Will be that crimson flesh a flood
Searing thy sockets in their own gore,
I think day o God, in that great day
When the scarlet sins run over
How cowed then these guises will show
When thy lovers forsake thee, and blow on blow quits blow!
  Cl. Now hear the unswerving tenour of mine
    oath
By Justice, that did fully venge my child,
By Ate and Erinys, whose his is,
Theirs by this sword in onward treading hope
Shall never stumble through the courts of Fear
So long as there is fire on my hearth
Aegisthus light, so long he be my friend,
My ample buckler in strong heart true shield.
He dead that had his lust of her the dear
Of every Chryseid under Ilium
And to this his slave of his, his fortune teller
He bedded bed with him, sooth prophetess,
And trumpet trumpet, she that with him rubbed
The towers bench smooth. They have their wage
    thou seest
How it is with him and she that like the swan
Has dirged her last, lies with him, where he lies
And this poor cresset, enabled in my bed,
Sets on my board rich diet's sans pareil.

  Ch. Come some quick death, but rack me not
    with pain
  Nor keep me long abed
  Let me the ornate drain
That brings the eternal sleep! My lord is dead,
And I care not for other company
My keeper graced with his best courtesy
Who for a woman warred on a far strand
And now lies fallen by a woman's hand
Oh, Helen, Helen, conscienceless and cursed!
How many souls of men under Troy's wall
  Didst thou cut off from life and light!
  Now thou hast done thy worst,
And in this blood, no water can wash white,
With the most perfect memorablest of all
The last rose in the garland twined
Thou corner stone of strife thou woe of human
    kind!
  Cl. Call not on Death, cast down by what ye see,
Neither on Helen turn your wrath aside
As if none else were deep in blood but she
Nor think, because for her our Danaans died
There is no other hurt past suffers
  Ch. Spirit that on these battlements, plumb-
    down,
  Dost drop on iron wings,
  To pluck away the two-fold crown
And double sceptre of the Tantalid kings,
Thou didst raise up two Queens, and gave the twain
Twin Souls, *to deal my heart a deadly wound*
Now like a carrion bird perched on the slain,
Thou singest thy song to an ill descant crooned.
  Cl. Now is thy judgment just, when thou dost
    cry
To that cursed Spirit, that thrice fatted Doom,
A Lust Incarnate Death that cannot die
That makes all Tantalids murderers in the womb,
Athirst for fresh blood ere the old be dry
  Ch. 'Tis a Destroying Angel, angered sore
Against this house a Spirit, great and strong
And evil and insatiable woe's me!
That stands at Zeus right hand to Whom belong
Power and Dominion, now and evermore.
What do we or what suffer of good or ill,
But, doing suffering we enact His Will?
And without God none of these things could be.
King my king, how shall I weep for thee?
  What shall my fond heart say
Thou liest in spider's web-work gyves!
In hideous death the fleet life ebbs away
  Woe woe that thou shouldst bow thy head
  On this unkingly bed,
By dagger hand despatched and treason's felony!
  Cl. Nay sink thy proud boast
Call not this my deed
Never suppose me Agamemnon's Spouse
A spectre in my likeness drew the knife
The old, the unforgiving Ghost,
Not I that was this piece of carrion's wife.
  And his assassination feed
Black Atreus of the Bloody Rouse,
  The Revel Grim.

She hath the altar dressed
With brawn of manhood for the tender limb
Of weanling infants taken from the breast
Ch Go to that thou art innocent of this blood
What witness will avouch? Though it may be
That Old Destroyer wove with thee the mesh
This bloody deluge like an on coming sea
That may not halt until it makes the flood
Rolls its rough waves with kindred murder red
Till Justice lave the rank corruption bred
Of that foul cannibal roast of childish flesh

King my king how shall I weep for thee?
What shall my fond heart say?
Thou liest in spider s web work gaspingly
In hideous death the fleet life ebbs away!
Woe woe that thou shouldst bow thy head
On this unkingly bed!
By dagger hand despatched and treason s felony!

Cl Is he guile free?
Hath he not slain
His own even my branch raised up from him
Iphigeneia wept with all my tears?
Ah to the traitor treachery!
He hath discharged in blood his long arrears
The measure he dealt is meted him again
Then let his big voice in the dim
Darkness of Hell
Sink low and sadly breathed
He hath his just quietus this great quell
Ripostes his stroke who first the sword
unsheathed

Ch Now like a weary wrestler
My fainting heart contends
Now that the house is falling
Where shall I find me friends?

But oh I fear to whelm it
Red Ruin roars amain
For the first shower is over
The early morning rain

Yea Fate that forgeth Sorrow
Now a new grindstone sets
There for fresh hurt her dagger
The Armourer Justice whets

Oh Earth Earth Earth! Would God I had lain
dead
Deep in thy mould
Ere on his silver sided pallet bed
I saw my lord lie cold!
Oh who will bury him dirge him to his rest?
Wilt thou sing his death song
Murderess of thine own man wail and beat breast
For thy most grievous wrong?
Mock his great spirit with such comfort cold?
Oh for a voice to sound
The hero s praise with passionate weeping knolled
Over his low grave mound!

Cl Let that alone it matters not to thee
For by our hand he fell he dropped down dead
And we will dig him deep in earth Let be
We ll have no wailers here but in their stead
His child Iphigeneia with soft beck
Where the rapid waves of the Ford of Sorrows hiss,
Shall come and fling her arms about his neck
And greet her loving father with a kiss

Ch So taunt meets taunt but Judgment
Is bitter hard to gain
Now spoiled is the despoiler
Now is the slayer slain

For Zeus abides upon His Throne
And through all time all tides
The Law that quits the Doer
The changeless Law abides

Who will cast out the accursed stuff
Bone of thee breath of thy breath?
Thy very stones thou bloody house
Are bonded in with Death!

Cl Now is thine oracle come to the fountainhead
Of bitter Truth As God lives I would swear
Great oaths to that cursed Spirit Whose ghostly
tread
Haunteth the House of Pleisthenes to bear
What s past endurance and take heart of grace
To pluck these rooted sorrows from my mind
Would he avaunt and harry some other race
With the Soul of Murder that seeks out his kind
Then with that Horror from this house cast forth
Which mads their blood with mutual butchery
Oh what were all its golden treasure worth?
A poor man s portion were enough for me

Enter AEGISTHUS *with his guards*

Aegisthus Oh day of grace meridian of Justice!
Now may I say the Gods are our Avengers
And from on high behold the crimes of earth
For now I have my wish I see yon man
Wound up in raiment of Erinys woof
The shroud that shrives his father s handiwork
Atreus his sire who here bear rule because
His power was challenged did his father s son
Thyestes my dear father—dost thou mark me?—
Outlaw and ban from home and kingdom both
Himself poor man a suitor for his life
Recalled from exile found fair terms enough
No death for him no staining with his blood
This parent soil But for his entertainment
Atreus this man s cursed father with more heat
Than heart towards mine with a pretended stir
Of welcome—oh a high-day of hot joints!
Dished up for him a mess of his own babes
The hands and feet he chopped and put aside
The rest minced small and indistinguishable
Served at a special table So he ate
Knowing not what he ate but purge thine eyes,
And own twas sauced with sorrow for his seed
And when he saw what wickedness was done

He groaned f ll back and spewed the gobbets up
Clamouring damnat on down on Pelops line.
Yea, kickin o er board and banquet cried
So perish all the house of Pleisthenes!
And th that pu h great Agam mnon fell
My grudg in this employ ed some stitchery
I was my poo si e s third son and sole hope
And he thru t me ut w th him in cradle clothes
But I grew up and J st ce called me h me
Outs de these walls I grappled w th y n man
Yea had a p vy part in th whol p t
And f r all thi I am content to d e
Now that n Vengean e toils I see h m snared
Ch Aegisthus, I hold him a caitiff who
Insults er sor ow You d st nd c nfessed
A m derer you say you sole conspired
Th so ry d ed I say to thee thou too
Shalt not escape damnat o they shall cast
Stones at thee ay heap curses o thy gravel
Ae You drudge you J ck that paddles in the
b le
Say you en so your betters on the bench
Of gu dance and command? Y ur tudy is
H mil ty old ma and you w ll find
'Tis hard f r d llard age to mind his book
But even for eld priso and h nge pi ch
Ar rare physicians. Hast no eyes for that?
Kick not aga nst the p cks lest thou g lame.
Ch You woman that b ing infamy on men
F esh from the field ay bolted saf indoors
Cuck lds a king a d plots to trik him do n
A Th s shall be faith s t a n ld f woe!
Oh Orph us had a voice but ot l ke thine
F r where h ear lled jocund N tur da ced!
Plagu on thy howlings! Th u shalt da e to them
Whither thou would t not nd by God o cec ught
We'll put som tameness in thee
Ch You my lord
You to be king in A gos! Pl tting murder
But t th man to d t!
A Was t the wife
The ead est way to gull him? Was n t I
Smoked a d pect his ne e t nemy?
It shall go ill ith me, b t th s man gold
Shall mak m master H that fights the rein
Shall fe l th b t nd I will mak t bea y!
No corn fed colt i m !H nge th t keep
House w th th hat ful dark shall h mble him.
Ch Thy thy soul not ma en ugh
To slay him fa fight? Wh did a wom n
Where ith the land reeks and her Gods are sick
K ll him? Orestes yet b holds the light
And he shall com in happy hour and be
The master and destroyer of you both
Ae Wilt ta e w lt rant wilt fall to deeds?
Why then
Blockhead thou shalt learn wisdom! Forward
m n!
Come stir good fellows! Faith you need not trudge
F r fo this fray
Ch Out swords!
Ae As God s my judge
My sword to yours, I fear not death not I
Ch Not? Then we take the omen t ou shalt die!
Cl Sweetheart! I charge thee do no villainy!
Nay do no more! What s sown is yet to reap
It is a harvest where the corn stands deep
And we must carry home full loads of care
W th ut our blood here s trouble and to spare!
Good gentlemen I pray you to your homes!
Bend to the hour when fraught with Fate it comes,
Lest w rse befall ye That which we ha e don
'Twas fated we should do Therefore begone!
Ah might this prove the end all of our woe
H w h ppy should we be to have it so!
So heavy on u is the bloody spur
Of a dre d pirit Destiny s m nister
Here is a woman s counsel will ye heed
Ae And shall these crop all rankness tongue can
breed
D e thei own fortune to the hazard brook
No rein call no man ma ter?
Ch When I crook
The knee to l you may call me h und
I am no son of this free Argi e ground
Ae I ll be re enged upon ye yet
Ch Not so
If Fate bring back Orestes
Ae Tush! I know
Th exile s wallet is with hope w ll lined
Ch Enjoy thy fortune do! Is not Fate kind?
Go n n sin wax fat make the stro g po er
Of Justice eek t heaven this is thine ho r
Ae Wild word but th y are reckoned t thy
sco e
Ch Ay trut a d crow a cock his dame befo !
Cl Nay never heed th r howli gs! Maste dom
And ki ly state a e ours come wh at may come
So in the palac thou a d I will dwell
And order all things xcellently well. *Exeunt*

CHOEPHOROE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ORESTES *son of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra*
PYLADES *friend of Orestes*
CHORUS OF SLAVE WOMEN
ELECTRA *sister of Orestes*
THE DOORKEEPER
CLYTAEMNESTRA
A NURSE
AEGISTHUS

Argos the Tomb of Agamemnon ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Orestes O Chthonian Hermes, Steward of thy Sire
Receive my prayer save me and fight for my cause
For I am journeyed back from banishment
And on this mounded sepulchre I call
On my dead sire to listen and give ear

* * *

This lock to Inachus for nurture this
For mourning

* * *

Father I was not by to wail thy death
Or with stretched hand despatch thine exsequies

* * *

What s this? Look you what company of women
With such ostent of sable stoles attired
Moves on its way? What trouble s in the wind?
Hath some fresh sorrow fallen on the house?
Or bring they these libations for my father
As my heart tells me to appease the Shades?
It cannot be aught else there is my sister
Electra walking with them and she wears
A woeful look O Zeus give me to venge
My father s murder fight upon my side
Pylades let s withdraw I would fain know
What may this woman s supplication mean
They withdraw and the CHORUS *enter with* ELECTRA

Chorus

Forth from the house they bid me speed
With graveyard cups to pour and these ill tuned
Ungentle hands quick throbbing drum beat sent
These cheeks in tender witness bleed
A fresh turned fallow with a gleaming wound
And my heart s bread is evermore lament

I tore my robe of fair tissue
And the poor rags methought with anguish cried
Being too linen soft and delicate
To be so wronged or as they knew
They wrapped a breast where laughter long had died
Or wailed a new malignancy of Fate

For terror wild with lifted hair
Wrung from the soul of sleep dark dream adept
In the dead hour of night a cry aghast
A shriek it was a shrill nightmare
That broke from the bower and where we women slept
In heaviness and sullen anger passed

And they whose judgment can expound
The meaning of such dreams let a great cry
The word of power that doth God s word engage
Underneath the earth s dark ground
Are grieving spirits wroth exceedingly
And tis against their murderers they rage

And now with gifts wherein is no remede
I come these woes to ward
For oh Earth Mother thus in her sore need
Woos pardon and peace a woman God abhorred
How dare I breathe that word? Where shall be found
Ransom for blood that s drenched the ground?
O hearth Calamity enwraps
O royal siege swift Ruin saps
What sunless glooms of Night inhearsed
By human horror held accursed
Darkeneth thee thou house of pride
For the deaths thy masters died?

The sovran awe uncombated unquelled
That through the general ear
Smote on the common heart hath now rebelled
And yet God wot there are who fear
Our infirm flesh boon Fortune deifies
The man grown God high God outvies
But Judgment swings through her swift arc
And censuring all doth poise and weigh
And she can set a soul in light
Or on the confine of the dark
The lingering agony delay
Or whelm with elemental night

Blood and more blood tis drunk of the dark ground
This earth that bred it knea ls it in her clay
Till it become indissolubly bound
A Power that shall itself arise and slay!

And with no hot haste to Vengeance spurs
Though tireless in pursuit once entered in
Still she adjourns the Day of Doom defers
Till there be full sufficiency of Sin

Who hath unlatched the door of cha ity
Enforcing the e the bridal bliss embowered
Shal nev r turn again the lden key
And ra ished once is e e mor deflowered

So, thou h all stream be aff ent to on end
Lucid and sweet to wash a a the stain
Of b ood from guilt hands, th d but spend
Thy rous d flowing clarity ag ain.

B t I—th hard constraint of hea en
En rounng m city dri en
From home my po tion sla ry—
If good or il they debate,
Must sm ther up my bitter hate
And be th m te f so eignty
And yet behind my eil I weep
M n hful maste s wasted days,
And this hush sorro on m lays
Th ch of w ter frozen sleep

Electra Bondmaids, th household s rule and
women
Sin in thi office ye are postulants
With me I pray you counsel m herein
What shall I say wh n these kind ups I pour?
How find fa r word t w them to m sire?
Lov ng ft t lo e —Shall I omm nd them so?
Husband from edded w fe ? Oh, t from her
Not from my mother I sh ld wa t for that
A ton u f br ss I ha n form f prayer
To pou these ff ri g o m fath s gra e
Or shall I om with cu tomary terms
And sk a bless on thei heads that sent
These ga land f fair deed fa ec npense?
Or and honourin le my father
Per ed dra n out the d h f r Earth t drink
And g t me h like ne that ca t o t filth
Fl n th rock f m m w th ted looks
Resol me, friends, that ou may sha my blame
W h omm nity f hat
Hid n t ou heart s deep th u hts f any fear
Th thin d t m ed wait tl fo th free
And him that t ther beck and nod
Know ou better wa quaint me with t.
Ch A t f alt th fathe tomb
And t hy bidd g I will peak m m nd
El Speak by that aw thou ow t hi sepulchre.
Ch Pour on b t ask good things fo all leal souls
El Which f m fr nd be they? how shall I
nam them?
Ch Th se f nd fter ll that hate Aegi thus.
El Then shall I offer pra r f r thee nd m ?
Ch I see th heart tructs th e how t pray
El And add nam beside
Ch R membe y t
Absent Orestes in thine orisons.
El Oh, ell admon hed! Ex ll tly sa d!
Ch M ndful f them that did the deed f blood—
El What then? p y o and I ll p y fte thee.
Ch A k that on th m catnal r ghostly come—
El Doomster or doom s executant?
Ch A stern
A eng r t ll suffice a k n thing more
El Is that holy thir to ask the Gods?
Ch Nay h w ho ld it n t be a holy thing
W th e il to reward an enemy?
El Great Herald of the Hei hts and Deeps, be
thou
My helper Chthonian Hermes cry for me,
And b d the Spirits of the Depths g e ear
That are the Stewards of my father s house
Cry to the Earth that bri gs fo th life and then
Of all she ursed receives aga n the seed
I will pou these libatio s to the Shades,
Saying O Fathe ha e c mpass o on me
And on O estes h w shall we bri him hom ?
We are sold f r a price ea she that ga e us birth
Hath di possessed s, t ken to h r bed
A isthus, th he guilty of thy blood
I m but a sla e ban shed Orestes hath
No po tion f thy ubsta ce with thy labours
Th y go apparelled in their insolence
I pra not known g h w t shall befall
O estes may come home hear m my father!
And fo myself I as a purer heart
Than hath m mother and more innocent hands.
Thi for oursel es but on our en m es
I pray A en in Just ce may ri e p
And h w them d wn en as they hewed thee
And so betw xt my pra rs that a k good things
Stands this, that imprecates e il o their heads.
Fo us send be edictions, by the help
Of Hea en and Ea th and Justice Triumphin
Now I pour out these cups, which you must wreathe
W th c stomary crown ts of your cries.
Chant th d smal paean f the dead
Ch F ll, perishable tears, w th plashin sou nd
Fall f r our fall n l d
And while th abominable cup is poured
The rite confound
The good ert
And to th nisc eant s hurt
Th e e il br n to pass,
And tho h death dull thy soul and deaf thine ear
Hearken O Ki g majest c shadow hear!
Alas! Ala ! Alas!
Oh, for th armed d li e
Th wielde of a m ht pea
The ar h r that shall bend aga nst the foe
Till horn meet horn th Scythi bow
Or foot to foot and fa to face
Beat out lfs to th earth with hu e self hafted
mac !
El Da k Earth hath drunk her potion in his
gra
M father hath t now But hear what s stran e
And passing t e.
Ch Speak I implore thee! Speak!
F t oh my fearful heart is wildl ur ed!
El H r s lock of hair laid on the tomb
Ch Whose What tall youth s? Or what deep-
girdled girl s?
El Why only look it is not hard to guess.

Ch I m an old woman and shall youth teach me?
El There s none would shed a hair for him but I
Ch Yea foes are they should mourn with
shaven head
El Tis like a feather of the self same wing—
Ch Whose hair is t like? I am on thorns to know
El Tis very like the hair of mine own head
Ch Not young Orestes gift in secret brought?
El It is a tendril of that vine I swear
Ch It is? But how dared he adventure hither?
El Twas sent this shearling of his filial love
Ch That s no less worth my tears to think that he
Will never again set foot in his own land
El To me it is the surging of a sea
Bitter as gall an arrow through my heart
These tears are but the thirsty thunder drops
Escaped from unwept deluges the flood
Is yet to come Who else that s native here
Could show the fellow to this goodly tress?
Nor was it clipped by her that murdered him
Tis not my mother s what a name is that
For her that hates her own and denies God!
But howsoe er by this and that I vow
This shining jewel is my best beloved
Orestes own I am beguiled by hope
Oh me!
Would it had sense a voice to make report
That I be shook no longer to and fro
But roundly bid to curse and spew it from me
If tis indeed shorn from a murderer s head
Or that twould prove its kin and with me mourn
This grave s bright ornament my father s pride
But when we call upon the Gods they know
By what great storms like mariners at sea
We are tossed and whirled And if they mean to
save
Then from small seed a mighty stem may grow
Ha! Here are footprints! here is double proof!
Look! They are like! They tally with mine own!
Nay there s a pair—each in outline distinct!
He hath been here with some companion!
Heel length of tendon all agrees with mine
The hope within me struggles to be born
And I am crazed until it come to birth
Or (*disclosing himself*) Henceforth pay fruitful
vows to the good Gods
For answered prayer
El Wherefore stand I now
So high in heaven s favour?
Or Thou hast sight
Of that which thou didst pray so long to see
El Know st thou whom my soul craves of all
the world?
Or I know thy heart is woe for Orestes
El How have my prayers prospered?
Or Here am I
No further seek for I am all thou lov st
El Sir art thou come to take me in a snare?
Or An if I do I plot against myself
El I fear you mean to mock my misery
Or I jest at mine if yours can make me merry
El Art thou indeed Orestes?
Or You are slow
To know me when you see me face to face
And yet this snip of hair could give you wings
And when you looked upon it you saw me
A footprint of your make was proof but now
Come put the shorn tress to the shaven head
Look at this stuff tis of your loom your spathe
Smoothed it you broidered this brave brede of
beasts
Refrain thy heart lest joy unhinge thy wits
For our dear kin are our most mortal foes
Ch Thou darling of thy father s house sole hope
Of saving seed watered with many tears!
Now show thy mettle win back thine own home.
El Thou eye that centres all sweet thoughts
four selves
Composed in one for there is none but thee
Left to call father and the tender love
That was my mother s ere she earned my hate
Yearns all to thee and all I felt for her
Twin sown with me and pitilessly slain
And ever my true brother my one name
Of awe may Power and Justice be with thee
And Zeus the greatest of the trinity
Or Zeus Zeus be perfect witness of these woes
Lo the young eagles desolate their sire
Dead in the tight-drawn knot the twisted coils
Of a fell viperess Orphans are we
And faint unfed unable for the prey
Our father took and to our eyrie bear—
So stand I in thy sight so she stands
The sad Electra fatherless children both
And either s home is outcast homelessness
The young of him Thy sacrificial priest
A mighty honourer of Thine if Thou
Cut off what hand will such rich guerdon give?
And if the eaglets Thou destroy there s none
To send and show Thy tokens among men
This royal stem if it be quite consumed
Steads not Thy altars when fat bulls are slain
Tend it and out of nothingness exalt
A house that seemeth rased even with the ground
Ch Oh you salvation of your father s house
Hush or some rogue sweethearts will hear of this
And with his pick thank tongue carry the tale
To our cursed masters whom I pray to God
I may see fry in bubbling pinewood blaze!
Or Great Loxias word shall never play me false
That bade me hold upon my perilous way
Entoning high and horrors freezing clod
To make hot livers lumps of ice forth telling
If I tracked not my father s murderers
As they tracked him nor took my full revenge
With brute bull fury gold cannot allay
My life must answer for it charged with all
Afflictions that can rob us of our joy
Of death in life earth s sop to malice old
He with dread voice in our frail hearing told
As foul serpigoes cankering the flesh
Gnawing the native wholesomeness away
Till all be furred with the white leprosy
Next of the Haunting Furies conjured up

To take full vengeance for a father's blood
Seen in the dark, with horrible amaze
Of worse wretch and wrench of tortured brows
And the black arrow winged by gainless hosts
Of murdered kindred, madness and wild fear
Saved on the night to harry and hound him forth,
Raw with the unmeaning scourge.
H never one of the first cup none swills
With him the red wine in the banquet hall
The s rare of his father's wrath
Forbid him every altar; none will house
Nor lodge with him all sweet civilities
Denied, and no man he may call his friend,
H dies their death in each part of him,
A consumed wretch, embalmed in rottenness.
Will—should I harken to these oracles?
If I do not the deed is yet to do.
All reasons meet to one great end
A God's commands, grief for my father's loss
Of all this I am bare, to want and scorn
The that most famous breed in all the world
Heart that tumbled Troy my noble Argives,
Should kneel Ch lest a pair of women
For he is not a man or if he be
The man is to be, soon shall see.
Ch. Ye W her Destinies, march on,
God with you till the goal be won
Where I stand fate is set.
"T tongue I will, be thy word,"
Loud is the voice of Vengeance heard,
When she exacts the debt.
"To the hand the dagger law"
"The doer quit — is an old saw
Whose m. hath savour yet
Or. O father of our woe!
How can I serve thee now by word or deed
From this far world what beam wind shall blow
Where the Eternal Anchors hold thee fast?
There by less day is no by
And at the end of death when thou hast passed
Our grief that are of Atreus' royal seed
I is thou, bare of glory and delight
Ch. Child, the proud spirit of the dead
Succumbs not to the ravening tooth of fire.
The passions work, when life is fled
The mourner wail
Discovers him that did the wrong
And anew a son for murdered sire
A ban to us that moves the trail
the dogs that to give tongue.
Or. His keen torn father our lament,
Wh th extended tomb our sad tears flow
As a m son I sad concent
Doomed to the hearts suppliant that come
Away the barred both from the hearth hall,
Met the common of the grave
What here of good Where any that is not woe
And worst Doom the master of us all
Ch. But God can touch the broken strings
To melody divine
And for this unhappy round,
The burden of sepulchral ground,
In the high banquet hall of kings
Bring the song, bring in new wine.
Or. Oh, if neath Ilium's wall,
Gashed by some Lycian spear
Father thou had'st fallen in fight,
Then hadst thou left thy house great praise,
And to thy children in the public ways
Honour in the eyes of all.
Then thou hadst been a sepulchre
Builded of many hands beyond the sea,
And easy would our burden be
And all its weight of earth how light!
Ch. And in the Kingdom of the Dark
Welcome wert thou to souls that nobly died
A lord of majesty and mark,
The enhearer
Of Hell's vast Thrones for while thou yet hadst breath
Thou wast a King and, in that Kingdom wide,
Next them that the lone orb of Fate upbear
Their rod and sceptre Deathl
El. No, not on Troy's far plain
Would I have thee lie, interred
Where Scamander's waters flow
With meaner men that fell to the spear
But none oh none that was thy peer
Death should have first thy murderers slain
And, having we had heard
Some far-off rumour of their doom
And never ate the bread of sin
Nor tasted of this cup of Woe.
Ch. Th tongue child, tells of things more worth
Than any weight of gold,
Or a bit of fabled bliss that's told
Of that far bourne beyond the bright North Star
So must thou range in fancy uncontrolled
But our hard hand scourge this unfeeling earth,
And at the massy gate fast shut of old
Th summons knocks where our sole helpers are.
They lie not whose hand at heaven's judgment bar
Who trium h now under God's malison
Yea, and b this children's stains won.
Or. Oh, twas finished, that word it clave
The dull ear that sleeps in the grave.
Zeus, O Zeus, if Thy command
Conjures from the Deeps below
Ghostly Vengeance, footing slow
Stretch forth an arm to give
Sinful soul and foul hand,
Evil lendings, full ripe,
Loan and interest shall have.
Ch. Oh, to read that air which about
When in their blood they lie,
The woman and her mate !
What wan of Desire
Hovers about me and burn?
I cannot hide this burning unrest
My spirit pass ever
Doth like a straining vessel breast
The bitter blast of hate !
El. And when will Zeus, the strong Godhead,

Grasp the bolt with grapplings dread
To cleave their climbing crests amain?
May firm affiance keep our land
I sue for nothing at God s hand
But that after oppression long
Justice walk the world again
Hear Earth and all the Chthonian throng
Throned in the darkness of the dead!
Ch It is the Law when man s blood falls
Man s blood shall pay full cess
With Haro! Haro! Murder calls
God s fell Erinyes
And in some late succeeding age
For souls slain long ago
Fresh horrors mount the bloody stage
For blacker deeds of woe
Or Oho! O heigh! Ye dim Dominions!
Princedoms of Death! Ye potent malisons
Of murdered men! Behold and see
Of Atreus noble tree
The poor the pitiful the last
Scantling from home and kingly state outcast!
Hear us O Zeus for we have none but Thee!
Ch I listen and tremble thy cry of dole
Fevers my heart anon
Faint for wanhope am I
It thicks my blood it clouds my soul
Thy passing piteous cry!
But when the fit is gone
And my fixed heart is firm to dare
Pain stands far off and calm and fair
And cool the brightening sky
El How move the dead? How prosper in our plea?
Oh what can wring them like our misery!
This cloud that overhangs
Our house these parent pangs?
Traitress! She could fawn and glose
But she can never cheat us of our woes
We are her children and have wolfish fangs
Ch I beat to the sound of the Arian dirging
Yea to the Kissian wailer s cry
With wild hands lifted high and high
Clashing and clutching and to sing and surging
Faster faster never ending
A tempest of blows on my head descending
And the noise like a hammer dinned through my brain
A passion of Sorrow a tumult of Pain!
El Oh mother deep in all
Damnation! Oh remorseless enemy!
A king borne out to unkind burial
No liegeman by!
A husband thrust in his grave and none
To wail or weep or chant an orison!
Or Ha! Did she use him so despitefully?
She shall aby full dearly her despite!
With Heaven to help and hands to smite
I ll slay her in her blood and die!
Ch Hacked like a thief by her that felon wise
Graved him in her cold malice that his doom
Might insupportably thy days consume
These were thy father s last death agonies

El They would have none of me humbled and chidden
Like a pestilent hound a cur unwhipped
Closeted up in the castle crypt
There in the kennelled darkness hidden
Freelier flowed my secret weeping
Than ever careless laughter leaping
When the world was gay and my heart was light
Brother my wrongs in the memory write!
Ch Let that thy courage brace
Like steel-drilled marble mortised and made one
With thy calm heart s unshaken base
What s done is done
But stick not till Expectancy behold
The sequel on be firm as thou art bold
Or Father be with us! Father thee I call!
El And I with heavy heart and streaming eyes!
Ch And all our many voices sound as one!
Rise oh rise
And feel the sun
Be with us gainst the common enemy of all!
Or Plea shall encounter Plea Power grapple Power!
El The righteous cause ye Gods judge righteously!
Ch I listen and I shudder while ye pray
Destiny
Abides alway
But prayer can hasten on the inevitable hour!
Or Oh heritage of Grief! Incarnate Woe!
Oh Bloody Hand of Doom that jars the strings!
Now is the voice of melody brought low!
El Oh how they grate these harsh chords
Sorrow wrings!
All Pang on pang and throe on throe!
Or Within there is no styptic for this wound
And the wide world is powerless to aid
By our own hands our safety must be found
El Fury with fury blood in blood be stayed
All This is our hymn to the Gods Earth bound
Ch Hear ye Earth dwellers all! that have
Power and bliss beyond the grave!
The seed of Childhood succour and save!
Or Father by thy unkingly death grant me
In thy high house lordship and mastery!
El Take away my rebuke let not men say
Behold
Aegisthus chattel marketed and sold!
Or Then as our fathers used feasts shall be spread
For thee else at the banquets of the Dead
Among the steaming bakemeats thou shalt pine.
El And of my rich dower plenished from thy store
To the refreshing draughts my cup shall pour
First of all sepulchres I will honour thine
Or Earth grant our sire our combat sore to see!
El Give Persephassa beauteous victory!
Or Think father of the bath thy life blood dyed
El Think of the cunning net the deep and wide!
Or In gyves no smith e er hammered caught and bound!

El. Wellings of Shame about thee treason wound!
Or. Doth not that sting thee rouse thee from thy
bed?
El. Wilt not lift up thy well beloved head?
Or. Bid Justice rise and battle for thine own
Or set us close with them as thou wast thrown,
If thou wouldst quell their might that dealt thee
doom!
El. Hear this last cry, my father, hear and save!
Lo, here on eagles' eyrie at thy grave
Both the man-child and the woman's womb!
Or. Let not this seed of Pelops be destroyed!
For then, in spite of Death, thou art not dead.
El. Children are voices that shake off the lethe
Of drowsy Death; yea, floats, whereby the thread
And thin woven line of Being is unbuoyed
Above the swallowing gulfs that yawn beneath.
Or. Hear for thy sake the outcry of our despair.
Thou savest thyself if thou receive our prayer.
Ch. Right well have ye discoursed your argument,
For because thou wast a nil fat unmourned
And now since thou hast nerved thee for the act
Dare and put thy Fortune to the touch.
Or. So shall it be. It's nothing from my course
To ask the meaning of these cups, and why
Her after scruple tends ... cureless sorrow.
Is Death a simpleton that she dares make
Such poor amends? What shall I think of these
Sorry bestowals for her huge offence?
Why, if a man should lavish all he has
For one least drop of blood, 'twere labour lost.
I prithee if thou canst enlighten me.
Ch. Son, I was there: she was so shook with
dreams
And terrors of the night, her wicked heart
So scared she trembling despatched these cups.
Or. Told she her dream?
Ch. She did. Methought
she cried
I was delivered of a serpent!
Or. Well,
Finish the story.
Ch. Then, as 'twere a child
She swaddled and wrapped it up in cradle-clothes.
Or. And what meat craved the dragon worm
new hatched?
Or. She gave it her own breast in her dream.
Or. Did she so? Then I warrant her paps are sore.
Ch. It milked her and sucked out the curdled
blood.
Or. There was meaning in this vision.
Ch. She cried in her sleep and started broad
awake.
And as the palace lamps, that hung blind-eyed
In darkness, blazed up for their mistress' sake
And presently she sent these love-cups
She thinks them surgery for distempered thoughts.
Or. O parent earth, sepulchre of my father
Answer my prayer and make this dream come true!
In my interpretation it coheres.
For look you, if the serpent came whence I came,
If it was wound in swaddling clothes, and gaped

With mumbling mouth about the breast that
nursed me
And mingled mother milk with curded blood
By this, and by her shriek that saw the dream
Then as she gave suck to a devilish thing
She dies in her blood and I am dragon fanged
To kill her as the dream would have me do.
Ch. Oh, good your reading of it contents me well
And Heaven fulfil it but give us first some clew
Which shall be actors here and who look on.
Or. In sooth, a simple story: she must within,
And it shall be your charge to cloak my plot.
So, as their treason slew a royal man
They may be tricked and the same noose they wove
Strangle themselves, even as Loxias spake
Apollo, Prince and Prophet never found false.
My guise a traveller and my traps complete
With Pylades here I go to the palace gates,
As a friend of the house—trusty—oh true as steel!
And he and I will talk Parnassian,
Mimic the parle of Phocis for the nonce.
'Tis like enough their varlets will not smile
A welcome: there's such devilment within.
No matter: we will wait and passers-by
Will say "How comes it Ægisthus denies
A stranger if he be not gone abroad?"
But once across the threshold of the court,
And if I find him on my father's throne
Or he come anon and look me in the face
Hold gapes for him, down drop his dastard eyes,
Ere he can quaver "What's your country?" I
Will put him on my sword a carcase for crows.
And then Erinys, that stints not her cups,
Shall quaff full healths of slaughter unallayed.
Go, sister, bear an eye to all within,
That nothing in our business go awry
(*To the* CHORUS)
And see that ye offend not with your tongue
Speak or say nothing as occasion serves.
(*To* PYLADES)
Hither to me second me with thine eye
Put mettle in my heart and point my sword.
Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

Chorus

The tribes of earth are fierce and strong,
And in the arms of ocean throng
The monster enemies of man.
From highest heaven noonday throne
Flashes and falls the thunderstone
On four foot beast and feathered clan.
Yea, and remember the hurricane
With his cloak of wrath outblown.

But the pride of man's spirit what tongue can tell,
Or woman's unruly desires, that fill
And hunger flock that feed on death?
These lawless yearnings of the blood
That master wanton womanhood
Corrupt sworn troth with venal breath
And break the bond that comforteth
Man and beast in field and flood.

Is that a fetch of thought beyond thy wing?
Learn of the plot that ill starred Thestias fired
And her own child s untimely death conspired
Casting into the flame
The rusty brand of his nativity
Prime comrade and coeval numbering
His minutes from that hour when with a cry
Forth from her womb he came
To the last day appointed him to die

Or wist ye not of the girl murderess
Whose infamy yet lives in legend old?
That for a carcanet of Cretan gold
King Minos gift by foes
Suborned delivered up a well loved head?
Stealing from Nisus the immortal tress
What time—Oh heart of dog!—in his noon bed
Breathing he lay in deep repose
And Hermes drew him down among the dead

But since old sorrows I recall
That suck no balm from honeyed shower
Pour out to brim the cup of gall
The sanguine wine of wedlock sour
Oh bid them from thy hall
And bid them from thy bower
These dark imaginings of woman s wit
Against her warrior
Whose mien the foe with darkness smit
The majesty of war
Bright shines the hearth were no fierce passions throng
And woman s valour when she shrinks from wrong

So in the roll of antique time
Her primacy black Lemnos bears
Her shame is cried in every clime
And all that horror dreads or dares
Of that cursed Lemnian crime
The sable likeness wears
She feels the ache of God s most grievous ban
And her despisèd race
Under the general scorn of man
Is gone to their own place
That which displeases God none holds in awe
What cite I here that contradicts His law?

There is a sword whose biting thrust
God s Law drives home plunged to the hilt
Clean through the naked heart for guilt
Lies not down trodden in the dust
That men may trample as of right
On all that s holy in God s sight

Now Justice anvil standeth fast
The Armourer Doom beats out her blade
Within is privily conveyed
A Child that quits the bloody past
That true born Child Erinys brings
Dark are her deep imaginings

Before the Palace ORESTES *and* PYLADES CHORUS.

Or Boy! Boy! Do you hear me knock? What boy I say!
Whos s there? Open if in Aegisthus halls
Be welcome for a stranger

Doorkeeper Ay have done!
I hear ye What s your country and whence come you?

Or Announce me to your masters I bring news
Meant for their ear And set about it quickly
For now the chariot of night comes on
Darkling it is the hour when travel casts
Anchor in hostelries and roadside inns
Let one of charge and consequence come forth—
Some worthy dame or stay a man were best
For then nice manners need not overcast
Frank speech a man is to his brother man
Open in converse free without offence

CLYTAEMNESTRA *appears at the Palace door with* ELECTRA

Cl Sirs what s your will? Here is such entertainment
As fits my house warm baths an easy couch
For tired limbs and looks of honest welcome
But if there s graver business to despatch
That s men s concern and they must hear of it

Or I come from Phocis I am a Daulian
And on the road with mine own merchandise
To Argos here which is my journey s end
A man to me unknown as I to him
Met me enquired my way and told me his
Strophius the Phocian as appeared anon
Sir quoth he since you are travelling to Argos,
Do me the service to inform his parents
Their son Orestes is no more forget not
And whether they decide to have him home
Or leave him ours for ever bury him
In his adopted land bring word again
Meantime his urn clips in its brazen round
The ashes of a man right nobly mourned
That was his message whether chance delivered
To whom it concerns who may herein command
I cannot tell but they whose son he is
Must surely be apprised of it

Cl Oh me!
How are we stormed upon broke breached despoiled!
Unmastered curse of our unhappy house
How wide thy range! Things out of reach thy bolt
Brings down from far and thou dost pluck from me
To the last hair all all that I hold dear!
And now Orestes he that thought to plant
His foot out of the mire of muddy death
The hope that physicked this debauch of blood
Pricked in thy roster answers to his name

Or Would I had better news to recommend me
To my so honourable entertainers
And grace their proffered welcome What can warm
The heart like kindness betwixt host and guest?
And yet it had been wicked to my thinking
Not to discharge an office laid on me
Both by my pledged word and your courtesy

Cl. Oh, nor for that will we stint your deserts
Or make you the less welcome to our house.
Another had brought these tidings, if not thou.
But it is time that day-long travellers
Find full repayment for the weary road.
(*To* ELECTRA)
Do you bestow him in the men's guest-chambers,
His company and all his retinue.
Let them be treated as becomes our house
And be it done as you shall answer it.
ELECTRA, ORESTES *and* PYLADES *enter the Palace*
These news we will impart unto our lord
And he and I, with help of our good friends,
Take counsel touching this calamity
CLYT. ELECTRA *follows*
Ch. Content! Content! Oh, when shall we,
Dear handmaidens, full lustily
Orestes' triumph-song resound
Sweet earth! Thou tomb high-shored,
Whose shadow sleeps on the lord's lord,
Give ear and send us present aid!
Now is the hour of combat knelled,
And Pallas with the tongue of guile,
In guise unversed moves darkly night,
And Nether Hermes cased in Night
Shall watch this grim and bloody round
Forth to the death with naked blade.
The NURSE *is seen coming out from the Palace*
The mischief works His hand is in, our guest!
Orestes' nurse, all tear bedewed Hist!
Whither away Kilissa, at the dark entry
Lamenting and Sorrow thy company?
The NURSE *comes to the door*
Nurse Why I am bidden by my lady run
And fetch Aegisthus, she'll have this confirmed
And man to man before it has time to cool
There are to meet to our. Anon her eyes
She wears a knitted brow but in her eyes
Lurks a laughter for this finish and ... close
Of her much ... though us ... compact
For us, this ... tidings ... that cleft my heart.
... God, when he has heard it, probed and proved,
I ... he has spent ... for joy
Heigh-ho!
Sorrows by score, Clytemnestra's wounding,
That ... in ... of Atreus' line
Did in the ... of them ... my heart.
But none of them were half so grievous-heavy
And I found patience to bear them all,
But my dear Orestes, wanderings of my soul,
Whom I took from his mother's womb, nursed in
my bosom
And at his peevish piping broke my rest,
And ... with him, tender and drudge,
And got no thanks. This ... was thing
While ... nurse, no ... whimsical
I ... cannot speak plain ... wrong to beg comfort
Nor drink? ... make water ... God
send
The ... was ... mind
I would ... his wants and ... as ... poor
Go ... and fall to washing dirty napkins.

Laundress and nurse too, all for my sweet babe.
On, turn and turn about, I plied both trades
When I took Orestes from his father's arms.
Alack, and now they tell me he is dead
And I must get me to this dunghill dog
Will take my tidings with a greedy ear.
Ch. How did she bid him come—in what array?
N. How? Say't again I do not understand thee.
Ch. Or with his bodyguard or unattended?
Nur. She bade him bring his Yeomen of the Guard
Ch. Never deliver to the brute her message!
Tell him to come alone, that he may hear
From lips unawed say "quickly cheerly come!"
A tale that's warped oft straightens in the telling!
Nur. Dost mean that these are welcome news
to thee?
Ch. 'Tis an ill wind Zeus cannot turn to good.
Nur. Good? And our hope, our dear Orestes dead?
Ch. 'Twere no mean prophet could expound my
text.
Nur. What mean'st? Hast aught that squares not
with the tale?
Ch. Run! Take thy message, do as thou art bid
Safe in Heaven's Hands is all that touches Heaven.
Nur. Well, I will suffer ye to have it so
And by the bounty of God may all end well.
Exit NURSE

Chorus

Father of Heaven, hear me in this hour
Raise up a fallen house' vouchsafe to bless
Hearts that thirst and eyes that ache
To see the Face of Soothfastness.
Justice is all the plea I make
Uphold it with thy Hand of Power

Oh, Zeus! Him in yon house of knaves
Prefer above his enemies,
And he shall bring Thee free will offerings,
With triple laud and threefold sacrifice.

'Tis but a Colt, bethink Thee, sired of One
Beloved, that's linked to the Iron Car of Woe!
Correct those fiery paces! Mete
The measure of his stride, that so
With steady rhythm of galloping feet
He break not till the course be run!

Ye Dwellers of the inmost shrine, adorned
With vessels of fine gold,
Hearken! Ye Gods, that with us went and
mourned!
Cancel with fresh Doom the blood of old
Shed guilt till all's undone!
Nevermore, come Time, come Tide,
In the House where Ye abide,
Grizzled Murder get a Son!

God of the Grot, the far-famed Fane,
Grant these Lord walls back their heir!
Let them Man's fair home again!
Grant them Freedom Grant them Light!

Is that a fetch of thought beyond thy wing?
Learn of the plot that ill starred Thestias fired
And her own child s untimely death conspired
Casting into the flame
The rusty brand of his nativity
Prime comrade and coeval numbering
His minutes from that hour when with a cry
Forth from her womb he came
To the last day appointed him to die

Or wist ye not of the girl murderess
Whose infamy yet lives in legend old?
That for a carcanet of Cretan gold
Kin Minos gift by foes
Suborned delivered up a well loved head?
Stealing from Nisus the immortal tress
What time—Oh *heart of dog!—in his noon* bed
Breathing he lay in deep repose
And Hermes drew him down among the dead

But since old sorrows I recall
That suck no balm from honeyed shower
Pour out to brim the cup of gall
The sanguine wine of wedlock sour
Oh bid them from thy hall
And bid them from thy bower
These dark imaginings of woman s wit
Against her warrior
Whose mien the foe with darkness smit
The majesty of war
Bright shines the hearth were no fierce passions throng
And woman s valour when she shrinks from wrong

So in the roll of antique time
Her primacy black Lemnos bears
Her shame is cried in every clime
And all that horror dreads or dares
Of that cursed Lemnian crime
The sable likeness wears
She feels the ache of God s most grievous ban
And her despiséd race
Under the general scorn of man
Is gone to their own place
That which displeases God none holds in awe
What cite I here that contradicts His law?

There is a sword whose biting thrust
God s Law drives home plunged to the hilt
Clean through the naked heart for guilt
Lies not down trodden in the dust
That men may trample as of right
On all that s holy in God s sight

Now Justice anvil standeth fast
The Armourer Doom beats out her blade
Within is privily conveyed
A Child that quits the bloody past
That true born Child Erinys brings
Dark are her deep imaginings.

Before the Palace ORESTES *and* PYLADES CHORUS

Or Boy! Boy! Do you hear me knock? What boy I say!
Whos s there? Open if in Aegisthus halls
Be welcome for a stranger

Doorkeeper Ay have done!
I hear ye What s your country and whence come you?

Or Announce me to your masters I brin news
Meant for their ear And set about it quickly
For now the chariot of night comes on
Darkling it is the hour when travel casts
Anchor in hostelries and roadside inns
Let one of charge and consequence come forth—
Some worthy dame or stay a man were best
For then nice manners need not overcast
Frank speech a man is to his brother man
Open in converse free without offence

CLYTAEMNESTRA *appears at the Palace door with* ELECTRA

Cl Sirs what s your will? Here is such entertainment
As fits my house warm baths an easy couch
For tired limbs and looks of honest welcome
But if there s graver business to despatch
That s men s concern and they must hear of it

Or I come from Phocis I am a Daulian
And on the road with mine own merchandise
To Argos here which is my journey s end
A man to me unknown as I to him
Met me enquired my way and told me his
Strophius the Phocian as appeared anon
Sir quoth he since you are travelling to Argos,
Do me the service to inform his parents
Their son Orestes is no more forget not
And whether they decide to have him home
Or leave him ours for ever bury him
In his adopted land bring word a ain
Meantime his urn clips in its brazen round
The ashes of a man right nobly mourned
That was his message whether chance delivered
To whom it concerns who may herein command
I cannot tell but they whose son he is
Must surely be apprised of it

Cl Oh me!
How are we stormed upon broke breached despoiled!
Unmastered curse of our unhappy house
How wide thy range! Things out of reach thy bolt
Brings down from far and thou dost pluck from me
To the last hair all all that I hold dear!
And now Orestes he that thought to plant
His foot out of the mire of muddy death
The hope that physicked this debauch of blood
Pricked in thy roster answers to his name

Or Would I had better news to recommend me
To my so honourable entertainers
And grace their proffered welcome What can warm
The heart like kindness betwixt host and guest?
And yet it had been wicked to my thinking
Not to discharge an office laid on me
Both by my pledged word and your courtesy

Ch. Oh, not for that will we scant your deserts
Or make you the less welcome to our house
Another had brou ht these tidings, if not thou.
But tis tim that da lon tra ellers
Find full sustenance for the weary road.
(T ELECTRA)
Do you bestow him in the men s guest-chambers,
His company and all his ret ue
Let them be treated as becomes our house
And be t done as you shall answer

ELECTRA, ORESTES *and* PYL D S *enter the Palace*

These news we will impart un o our lord
And h, and I, wi h help of our good friends,
Tak counsel touching this calamity

C YT EMNESTRA *follows*

Ch. Con ent! Content! Oh, when shall we
Den st handmaidens, full lovely
Orestes triumph son resound?
Majestic earth! Thou cliff h h shored,
Whose shadow sleeps on the loneships lord,
G en and send us present aid!
Now is th hour of combat knolled
And Pi ev th the tongue of good,
In gu mentsed mo es darkl di ht,
And N ther H rmes cloaked n N ht
Shall watch this grim and blood round
Fought to the death w th naked blade

The *use is seen passing within.*

The misch f works His hand is in, our gues !
Orestes nurse, all tear bedabbled Hist!
Where steps has she the dark entry
Unsu d Sorrow all her compan

The *comes to the door*

Nurse Wh I am bidden b m bid run
And fetch Aegisthus she'll ha e this confirmed
And man to man before t has tim to cool
They are to piece t out Amon her s es
She wears a knitted brow but in her eyes
Lurks la hter for this finish and fair close
Of her much ca thou h tis of ca compact
For us, this tra e take that cl ft my heart.
Lo, Go w en h has heard t probed and proved,
How will his spirit dance for joy

Her h ho!

Sorrows beyone ul w h worse ill confoundin
Th lon s k avouries of Atreus lin
Did, in the comin f them, wrin m heart.
B t none of them were half so grievous hea y
And I found patienc to bear them al
Bu m dea Orestes, spend s f my soul,
Whom I took from his mother s womb, nursed in
m k
And at his peevish pipin b oke my rest
And was so patient with him trudge and drud e,
And g t no thanks. 'Tis b t witless thin
We ha e to use no help mor whimsical,
It can t speak plain. wean n in long clo hes
Woo t drink woo t eat? make water woo t God
mad
Th little bell law unt tself.
I would di ne his wants, and ft as no
Go wron and fall to washin dirty napkins,
La ndress and nurse too, all for my sweet babe.
Oh, turn and turn about, I plied both trades
When I too Orestes from his fath r s arms.
Ala k and now they tell me he is dead
And I must get me to th s dunghill dw
W l take m tid gs w th a greed ear
Ch. How did she bid him come—in what array?
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Hearts that thirst and eyes that ache
T see the Fa e of Soothfastness.
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Uphold it w th the Hand of Power

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Prefer above his enemies,
And he shall bri T ee free-will offer es,
With triple lauds and threefold sacrifice.

'Tis but a Colt bet k Thee sired f One
Beloved that h ked t the Iron Ca of Woe!
Correct those fe pa es Mete
Th measure of his s ride that so
With stead rhythm of galopin feet
He break not till the course be run!

Ye Dwellers of the utmost shrine adorned
W th vessels of f gold,
Hearken! Ye Gods, that w h us wept and
mourned!
Cancel with fresh Doom the blood of old
Shed until till l and well
Nevermore com T m come Tid
I th House whe e Ye abid
Grizzled Murder get a Son!

God f th Crot th vau ed Fane
G e these bond wa s back their s ht!
M ke them Man s fair home again!
G e them Freedom! G e them L ht!

Through this dark Veil of Thy Grace
Make them show a shining face!

Meet is it Maia s child with subtlest craft
Our dubious venture speed
Is none so deft so nimble light to waft
To port the hazard of a dextrous deed!
He opens or shuts with Yea and Nay
The gold of His hid Treasury
His Word is night to the seeing eye
And darkness in the broad noonday

Then for deliverance from Despair
For a steady breeze and strong
We ll harp and sing to a merry air
The mumping witch wives song

The ship rides free come fill my lap
Put money in my purse
Largesse fair Sirs for your good hap
And the boon of a broken Curse

Thou to the deed march boldly on
And when thou hear st her cry My Son
Answer— Not thine! —and with one blow
In blameless blood guilt blot this Woe!

On! Lest a word should win thee
A look break down thy guard
Harden the heart within thee
As Perseus heart was hard!

Make stern amends relent not
Doth the wronged ghost forgive?
Relax not—pause repent not!
They ask it that yet live!

Strike strike for Hate s allaying
The House of Hate within
And with one sinless Slaying
Slaughter the Seed of Sin!

Enter AEGISTHUS

Aegisthus I come not here unasked a message reached me
I m told there s a strange rumour certain men
Our guests have brought little to pleasure me
Orestes death That were with a fresh load
To chafe a sore that runs with fears unstaunched
And open bygone Murder s aching scars
Shall I concede it true? Looks t forth clear eyed?
Or null and void as woman s vain alarms
A flight of sparks that presently come to nought?
What canst thou tell me that shall clear my doubt?

Ch Only that we have heard it go within
Question the strangers man to man there lies
The marrow and pith of all the news e er brought

Ae I ll see this messenger and question him
Again if he was present at the death
Or vents a tale that hath no substance in it
They that would steal my wits first steal my eyes

Exit

Ch Open my lips order my prayers aright
O God above!
Give them the strength the breadth the depth the height
Of my exceeding love!
Now on the soilure of one slaughterous sword
Hangs Doom and Death
For all the race of Agamemnon Lord
Or light and breath
Of liberty on its keen edge shall glance
And by those brandished fires
He shall possess a Kingdom s governance
And the glory of his sires
And in this gest a solitary knight
Two crafty foes grips he
Even Orestes girt with a hero s might
God give him Victory!

A shriek is heard within the Palace

Hark!—Hush!—which way
Went the battle? What is Heaven s will
O House for thee this day?
Let s go aside that in this dark event
It may be thought that we are innocent
What s done is done or be it good or ill

The Inner Court

Doorkeeper Alas my master! Oh my lord Aegisthus!
A bloody bloody end! Open! Be quick!
Unbar the women s gates! Muscle and brawn
Mettle of manly youth we need you now
But not—God help us—for the helpless dead!
Ho there within! Oho!
Tis shouting to the deaf they are asleep
They heed me not! Where s Clytaemnestra? What
Doth she? Fore God her neck is for the knife
Yea by the hand of Judgement she must fall!

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA

Cl What s this? Why do you keep this bawling here?

Doorkeeper The dead have come to life and slain the quick

Cl Ah God! Ah God! I read your riddle we
Are to perish even as we slaughtered him
Tricked and betrayed! Bring me a battle axe!
We ll know if we mount high or fall full low
I touch the bound and bourn of all my woe

Enter ORESTES PYLADES *with him*

Or I am come to fetch thee thy fellow hath his fill

Cl Oh—my dear st love—Aegisthus—dead —dead—dead!

Or Thou lo st him? Good! Then thou shalt lie with him
In s grave there thy false heart can never betray him

Cl Oh ho! I thy hand! My child—my babe —look here!
My breast be tender to it thy soft gums
Did in thy droze so often drink its milk

O Pylades, what now? Shall I be tender to her?

Pylades What then were Loxias prophesyings worth

His holy oracles? What oaths deep-sworn?
B tter th world thine enemy than Heav n!
Or Thou art my better mind thou counsellest
well.
Come here I mean to slay thee where he lies,
Whom thou didst count a better than my father
S ep with him n death since thou lov st him,
and hat st
Him whom thou oughtest truly t ha e lo ed
Cl I nursed thee I would fain grow old w th
thee!
Or What? Kill my father and make thy home
with me!
Cl. Destiny dear child wa partner i my guilt.
Or And Dest ny ccompli hed thy doom
Cl Child fear t thou not a mothe s malison?
Or M th r! You cast m out t misery!
Cl N t cast thee out. They were our trusty
friends!
Or You basely sold me born a free man s son
Cl Wher s the price that I ece ed for thee?
Or I am ashamed to tell thee openl
Cl Na do but fea e not out thy father s sins!
Or He rou ht for thee while thou sat st saf at
home.
Cl Tis nature child unmanned we he and
pi e.
Or They win ye bread that ye ma eat at ease
Cl Is it e en so? Child wilt thou sla thy
mothe
Or Thou art t thyself, it s not I that kill thee.
Cl. Bewar the ban-dog f mother fury!
Or Except I do this how shall I scape my
fath s
Cl. I am like one that cries to the deaf gra !
Or My father fate trikes thee with airs of
death.
Cl. Thou art th spic I brou ht forth and
nursed!
Or Thy fearful d eam was p phet of thy woe
And thy foul sin pa s forfeit in thy sorrow
ORESTES *drag* CLYT EM ESTRA *f l wed by*
PYLAD S.

Chorus

Oh, my heart s heavy even for their fall.
B t since th g ry ed fi e of woe
Orestes c pes and ow us best so
That he be q enched wh was th ey of all.

Th came Priam son at la t
Jud me t and R tr but o so
T e cam two Li n w apped n n taw y hide
To Agam mnon house ea two-fold War
But warned at Pytho, fur ous nd fa t,
Th banished man d ove o amai th God for
Guide.

Shout! Shout Ho! th a jubilant rouse!
Shout f m l rd nd my lord house
Del e ed from e d f om the twain that d filed
His hearth and his substan e squandered!

Farewell the lone the trackless wild
The waste of Woe we wandered!

Came He that l es the dark surprise
Deep Retribution subtly plan ed
And Zeus own Daughter in thi combat d re
H r finger la d on the a eng r s hand
Men call her Justice—on her enemies
She vents the bla t of her consuming ire

The Voice of Loxias,
In great Parnassu rocky cavern heard
The word of gu le wh re no gu le was,
Though long deferred
Hath come to pass
Th power of God can never pass away
Because no evil th n is holy thereby
Meet is it then we worship and obey
H s go ernance Whose Hand sustains the starry
sky

The dawn breaks fair the n ht is spent
Th bit i loosed and bridle unbound
Rise wall ! Rise tower and battlement
Ye shall o more lie le elled to the g ound.

And t shall ot be lon
Ere pardoning Tim the world s great H erarch,
Shall pass w th sou d of charming song
These portals da k
Absol the w g
And break the pell that bound them utterly
Fo tu e shall throw a main and sweep the board
And we hall see her face and hear her cry
Here will I make my home to your fair house
restored

The scene d scovers O ESTE *and* PYLADES
sta g over the de d bo s of CLYTAEM ESTRA
and A THUS

Or Behold the tyr nts that oppressed your land
Slayers of fathers, plundere s of king ho ses,
But o the k pt great tate seated o thrones
Yea and methinks, th y yet li lo ng!
In death tru honoure s f their oath nd bond
The swar that th y would kill my father sware
To d e to ther and were not f rsworn
B hold ye judges f their heinous crimes,
The thing they wrought the links that bound my
fath r
Cy es for h wrists a d f tters f h s feet.
Shake t b oad tand round me in a ring
H out these t ppings, that a fath r s eye
N t mine but he that watcheth all the world
Hel os may ew my mother s handiwo k
Ay and hereafter test fy fo me
That justly I pursued en to the death
My mother I eck not Aegisthus nd
For by th law the ad lt r shall d e.
B t h that hatched thi h o for her l d
By whom she went with child carried the load
Of sometime l v —b t this tells y u t as hate!

What? Had she conger s teeth or adder s fangs
She had corrupted where her tooth not bit
So absolute was she in iniquity
How shall I name this right and use fair words?
Trap for a beast? Clout for a dead man s feet?
A towel is t? Fore God a trapper s toil
A noose a gown that trips the wearer up
Some rascal publican might get one like it
That robs his guests for a living ay with this
Put scores away and feel no cold fit after
I pray God one like her may never house
With me—I d liefer go childless to my grave

Ch Ai ai! the woeful work! This hideous death
Ends thee thy pride and all thy passions cold
For him that yet must draw this lethal breath
The flower of suffering begins to unfold

Or Was this her work or not? This proves it this
Robe sullied with Aegisthus dagger plunge
The tinct of murder not the touch of Time
Alone hath—here and here—spoiled its rich brede
I ll praise and mourn him now I was not by
To mourn and praise with his death robe before me
Sad act sad end thrice wretched race triumph
No man need envy soilure of my soul

Ch Time grants not our so perishable clay
Bliss that endures or glory that shall last
Heaviness wears the instant hour away
Or it will come before the next be passed

Or Mark this for I know not where it will end
Dragged like a driver of hot headlong horses
Quite from the track beaten and borne afar
By break neck thoughts fear at my heart at stretch
To strike up the grim tune whereto twill dance
While I am in my senses I protest
I slew not friends my mother save with cause
My father s blood upon her and Heaven s hate
I lay it on the charm that made me bold
On Pytho s prophet Loxias that charged
Me do the deed and sware to hold me guiltless
If done if not I sink the consequence
No bolt ere shot can hit that height of suffering
And now behold and see how I am furnished
With branch and wreath and thus apparelled go
To earth s great nombril precincts Loxias ground
And that famed fount of indestructible fire
Kin murder s outlaw at no hearth but His
Did Loxias bid me look for sanctuary
Hereafter let all Argives bear me out
Not without strong compunction did I deal
So ruefully with her that gave me life
I am a wanderer now I have no friends
But live or die this shall be told of me.

Ch Thou hast done well let words of evil note
Be far from thy lips give not ill fancies speech
Thou hast delivered all the land of Argos
Sawn off with one sword sweep two dragon heads.

Or Ha! Ha!
Women they come about me—Gorgon shapes
Sheeted in grey—clasped round with scaly folds
Of intertwisted snakes —away! away!

Ch True son to thy father what fantastic thoughts
Are these? Stand fast! thou hast triumphed fear for nought

Or These fearful torments are no phantasies
These are the leashed sleuth hounds my mother slips!

Ch Because the blood is fresh upon thy hands,
Therefore this sudden frenzy rocks thy soul

Or Apollo! Prince! Look look!—They come in crowds
And from their eyeballs blood drips horribly!

Ch Haste thee where cleansing is! To Loxias!
Hold fast to him and find deliverance!

Or Ye see them not but I see them they turn
Upon me! Hunt me forth! Away! Away!

He rushes out

Ch Fair Fortune go with him God be his Guide
God keep him ceaselessly and send him peace!

There rose Three Winds and shook thee sad palace where Power sat throned
And now the third bloweth over the last that the first atoned
The First Wind came with crying of children slain long ago
Long long was it a dying the Thyestean Woe!
The next Wind swept with slaughter but not by the foeman s sword
All bloody was the water that laved Achaia s lord
Now the Third Storm hath struck thee from the vast of an infinite gloom
Shall I hail thee Wind of Deliverance or art thou a blast of doom?
Oh when will thy course be finished when wilt thou change and cease
And the stormy heart of Havoc be lulled into lasting peace?

Exeunt

EUMENIDES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE PROPHETESS	CHORUS OF FURIES
APOLLO	ATHENE
ORESTES	THE JUDGES
THE GHOST OF CLYTAEMNESTRA	ESCORT

Del ⊢ Before the Temple of Apollo

Prophetess

Before all Gods my pun tual prayer prefers
G ia, first Prophetess Th mis next her
Who did succeed her Mothe in th seat
Oracular as some ha e told u third
In order by her free unf rced consent
Sat here nother T taness, Chthon s child
Phoebe and sh ga e t a b rthday gift
To Phoebus, who took on him Phoebe name.
From h till mere h s era ∽y Delian Isle
On Pallas shore th port of ships, deba ked
H th he eam to th s Parnassian grot
W th fair conduct and w rsh p and great laud
From Hephaestus sons, that hewed his path and made
Th un eclaimed d sa ·age reg on tame
Rich ho ur had he here fr m the simple folk
And fro n Delphos, th ir prin and go ernor
And Zeus possessed h m of his mystery
And planted I m fourth seer upo this throne
Pr ph t f Zeus s Loxias, Son f Sire.
These ar th gods f prefatory prayer
B t P onaa Palla hath prime mentio too
Th ir lauus the Nymphs of th Corycian Rock,
Hollow bird l e pa r f De t es
The wild is B mun cha neve f g t
Since His Di unity c pt ined the B c hanals
And tonted Ka g Pe theus l k mountain hare.
On Pleistu Fountain and Poseidon s Fo ce
I call, and h hest Zeus, All Perfect r
Er l g and t k m∖ p ph t throne
And now good hap all h tof re ex ll ng
Wait on my goi in and e ery G eek
By lot admitted and old cu tom law
I deal mi sw rs th God m guides.

Sh er er th Temple a eturns im st ammed.ately

Hor ors past peech h rs I durst ot look n
H dri en m f rth n fr m Lo ias House!
My limbs failed m I could n t tand upright
O hand d kn es I scra nbled al the g ound!
Fea makes us old wi es na ht helpless as babes.
A I wa pass g toward the wreath hun shrine
I saw ma n ht t th N mb il St ne,
H did poll te sit lik suppliant blood
Dr pped from his hand h h ld naked sword
And high branched and leafy oli e bough
W th a great flock of wool all meekly tied
A sil ery fleece of that I am very sure.
And o er against the man a company
Of awesome wom n sound asleep on thrones
And y t not women rather Gorgon shapes
And yet not Gorgons n ther by their mien.
I ha e seen pictures of She things that snatched
At Phineus fea t but these m thought were all
Wingless and black and made my blood ru cold
Th y snored w th I la ts I dared not draw a gh.
And f om their eyes let ooze a e il rheum
The garb no estment for the ma ble Gods
Nor fit t carry t the homes of men.
I e c saw the kindred or the tr be
Of th s strange f llowsh p, nor know the land
Could b eed them and n t sorrow f r their birth.
Let this be looked to by great Loxias.
Pr phet and leech and portent reader He
In homes n t His the Purgat rial Power Exit

The Tem le do s open disclos all that th Prophetess has described APOLLO stands over ORESTES

Apollo My word is passed I never will forsake thee
Thy guardian to the end close at thy side,
And far way n t tender to thy foes
These ontish maws are muzzled now th u seest
These cursèd carlines cast into sleep
Old barr ners, th early get f Time
N er cla ped in lo e b God or man or brute
For I ils sake br u ht fo th s ce f ll e me
The Dark th it pole nd Tartarus neath the world
I nds loathed f flesh a l of Ol mpian Gods.
N il less, fly tho nd ne er fa t thy heart
F th y will dri e thee o r cont nents,
T ead g for evermo e the tra lled earth,
And o th sea and cities fa ensiled
Wor ry ot e thy warfare come chew not
The cud f fea ful pha ta y Get thee
T Pallas Town th ere cla p her statua
And we will find thee Jud es of th ca se
And fram sooth peeches th t shall work like ch m
F r e∖ rm e del v rance f om thy sorrow
I pe that bade thee t ke thy moth r down.
Orest O Prin e Apollo, Thou know st to do right

Let not thy lore oblivious lapse from use
Thy puissance to effect is my sure bond

Ap I charge thee think on that fail not from fear

He turns to the statue of Hermes

And thou My blood brother My Father s Son
Hermes be Thou his Keeper prove Thy Name
Great Guide be Pastor of my sheep that cries
To me Zeus careth for the castaway
With Thy fair escort sent among mankind

Exit ORESTES APOLLO *retires into the Sanctuary*
Enter the Ghost of CLYTAEMNESTRA

Ghost of Clytaemnestra

Sleep then Sleep on! And whereto serve your slumbers?
I only must endure your contumely
In death the rebuke of my assassination
Clings to me yet among unbodied ghosts
A vagabond an outcast! Let me tell ye
They lay a sore indictment to my charge
And for these fearful wrongs mine own dealt me
Not one of all the Invisible Powers is wroth
Though mine own child lifted his hand against me!
Look at these wounds! Behold them with thy heart!
When the soul sleeps the inward eye is bright
No glance of Fate is glimpsed in the waking day
Times without number at my hand ye lapped
Your draughts not mixed with wine abstemious cups
Your solemn midnight suppers I have roast
At mine own hearth when no God else is served
And yet all this is trampled in the dust
And he is fled gone like a fleet foot fawn
As lightsome leapt the toils and laughs full loud
Give ear! For I have pled for soul for life
For being! Wake Goddesses of the Deep!
A dream that once was Clytaemnestra calls

A note of whining

Whimper and whine but you have lost your man
He hath his friends and they are not like mine

Whining

Thou sleepst too sound *thou carst not for my wrong*
Orestes that spilled his mother s blood flits free

Growling

Thou snarling slug a *bed! Wilt not get up?*
What hast thou done but evil since time was?

Growling

Weariness and Sleep the arch conspirators
Have stolen the fell Dragon s strength away!

Two sharp howls

A Fury (still asleep) There there there there! Ware hound!

Ghost Thou hunt st the hart in dream and like a dog
That ne er hath done criest on the trail in sleep
What would st be at? Up lest sloth master thee
And with its dull balm numb the nerve of pain
Ache with that inward anguish thou dost owe
The rankle of remorse stern virtue s barb!
Let loose on him thy breath that reeks hot blood!
Dry him up with smoke! Blast him with fire of thy belly!
Make this fault good and follow to his fall!

She rushes out

Chorus Leader Rouse all! Rouse her—and her! And I ll rouse thee!
Sleep st? Get thee up! Shake off the shackling sleep!
Let s see if we have jeopardied our chase!

1 Undone! Undone!
Oho! Oho!
We are shamed! We are shent!
2 I have hunted my woe!
3 Ah sister and I
And all of our cry!
Balked baffled and foiled
We panted and toiled
As hounds on the trail
While the thicket he kept
But the deer leaped the pale—
4 While I slumbered and slept!
1 A thief and a knave
Art thou Zeus Son!
2 Our ancientry
Thy youth hath o er run!
3 The suitor finds grace
At thy hands this day!
The wicked one
The matricide
That Heaven defied
Thou of Heaven s high race
Hast stolen away—
4 And was this well done?

Chorus

It is a knotless cord that cuts me most
A phantom smart
A charioteer of Dream a chiding Ghost
Hath wrung my heart!
I have been whipped I stiffen at the stake
A public show
The hangman s knout hath stung me with dull ache
Blow upon blow!

Tis the new fashion their just heritage
They count too small
They must engross these godlings come of age
They will have all!
And we must see the world s great Nombril Stone
Spout blood aghast!
Polluting purples desecrate a throne
Whose gules shall last!

Blind Seer! Himself infects His Holy Seat
With obscene unction mires
His inmost Altar whose hearth embers heat
Prophetic fires
Self bidden self impelled
Against Heaven s Law He hath rebelled
A dying cause He honoureth
And immemorial Rights consigns to death!

H ha h become abominabl to me!
Nor shall to the end of Tim
Cast loose whom H hath bound to Him, go free
Th Patron God of Crime?
Where one takes soil, a thousand cursed
Miscreants shall follow on th first
Set their unhol feet pon his head
Trample His sanctuary with unqui t tread!

Enter APOLLO, *with his bow and quiver f arrows*

A Ou !! I command ou F st and fast r yet!
A oid M precincts! Quit Mi e oracl !
Or take th ve wi ed adder seen,
Shot from M bow that s strun with golden wire,
And with the pan puk up back froth of men,
The ter b gobbets thou hast sucked from
slaughter!
Y do presume when ye come near My house
Ye should be with chopped head and gor ged-out
eyes,
Dooms, exec tions, maimed utilities,
Bow-emitus, m tilations, wh ttled trunks,
S re s, deep groans and mon ning shri ks,
Stares staked on iron pales! Now ha e heard
Your bornb reen that makes Gods hat ve
Your dainty dish A evers thi bout
Betokens t. In som blood boltin den
Of lions hu h and house but rub not off
Your foul, infectious hades to m nch fane
Go graz goat G t hence unshepherded!
No son f Hea en would deign t pastur e!

Ch. Now hs en t our answer King Apollo!
Thou art—I sa t the bett of this—
But t e so Doer Thou and onl Thou.

A How I beseech thee So far thou mas st peak.

Ch. Thou bad t t guestlin favened d
matricide

A I bad him en his father w at of that?

Ch. Red handed Thou ece edst th murderer

A I charged him hast for cleansin t M house

Ch. And dost Thou rail t them that help him
hither

A Y are not fit t enter where I dwell.

Ch. It is our bounden d t and our harm.

A What dignity is this Cry me our worth!

Ch. W harry mother murderers from men
homes.

A Wha do t wif that kills her h sband?

Ch. 'Tis no so back as swain kind ed blood

A Injurious bars, e mak f no cou t
H h Hera ial bond and Zeus troth plight
Cypris the tenour f our pleading scoffs,
That gi es t men th dearest j s flesh knows.
Th marriage bed parcel is f F t
Hedged b holier law than all oaths else
If there be murder there, and thou relax,
Not punish, nor bend that h n gry brow
I sa in law thou canst not ban Orestes.
For I per ei burn with zeal ga nst him,
And show toward them marvellous unconcern.
N t so th Goddess when she tries th cause

Ch. N t wh Time lasts will I nquish him.

A Pursue him then and multiply thy travail.

Ch. B eathe no abrid ement of my majesty

A Nay were it tendered me I d none of it

Ch. Great art thou, ranked no low r than Zeus
chair
H !I smell mo her b ood! It leads me on
To vengeance I w ll hunt the miscrea t down!

The CH ORU *rush out*

A I will protect him, and draw him out of harm.
Dreaded of men and feared in Hea en s the wrath
Of him that sues for grace f I forsake him.

*A year or perha s lo ger p sses the scene
changes to Athens and the Shrine of Pallas
wh se image stands in fron f the stage
Enter* ORE TES *weary with bleeding feet*

Or Athena, Queen, b Loxias command
I am here be kind rece e a runagate
But not a recreant with uncleansed hands.
M guilt grows dull the edge of it worn down
On hearth not mi and the h hways of the world.
Across wide continents, over the sea,
To Loxias oracular command
Obed nt I am come unto Thy house,
Yea, t Th hol Statue, Goddess,
Here will I harbour and abide Th Doom.

He crouches down and cla s the image
Enter the CHORUS.

Chorus

Aha palpable trace we ha e him now!
Follow thi clos informer s mut record!
W are the hound and he is th h t fawn
Th blood the trail, and we ma k every drop.
Ha I breathe hard, this helter skelter heaves
M hollow flanks we ha e quartered the whole
earth,
Across th ocean warped our wi less way
Still c ose abeam, and ne e lost h sail.
Or here, or not far off he quaketh sore.
Th sm ll of man blood is lau hter to my soul—
A winsome treat!
Go seek, go seek go seek!
Sea h nd sound
All this g ound
Lest t abond we chase
S p into saf haun pace
And for mother murder done
Guilt son
O t of Law each scape scot free.
There—there—there.
Yond h sits!
See how h knits
H m bout Her ima old
That b eathes ambrosial air?
And d th Her succour mak thee bold?
And d thos hand implore
H sentenc That shall never be!
Sorrow on thee!

Th mother blood those murderous hands have
shed
I irreco erably fled!

The swallowing earth shall yield it n vermore!
Thy life for hers thou shalt fill me a cup
    Drawn from those veins of thine
Deep draughts of jellied blood I will sip and sup
    Though bitter be the wine
And then when I have sucked thy life blood dry
    I ll drag thee down below!
There mother s son shall mother s agony
    Expiate throe for throe!
And thou shalt see all damned souls whilome
    Sinners gainst God or guest
Or parent and of each the righteous doom
    Shall be by thee witnessed!
For Hades is a jealous Judge of Men
    And in His Black Assize
The record writ with ghostly pen
    Cons with remorseless eyes

Or I am made perfect in the rule of Sorrow
By oft occasions schooled know when to speak
And when refrain But on this theme I am bid
By a most wise Preceptor ope my lips
The blood from off this hand fades fallen on sleep
The spot of mother murder is washed white
That when twas fresh on Divine Phoebus hearth
Was purged away with blood of slaughtered swine
Twere long to tell from that first hour all those
I have consorted with and harmed no man
Now with pure lips that can no more offend
I ask Athena Sovreign of this realm
To be my helper Hers are we then not won
In war myself my Argos and her people
By pact well kept her fedaries for ever
If she about the parts of Libya
Round Triton s rapid river her natal stream
Her foot advance or veil with flowing train
True friend of them she loves or Phlegra s flats
Like a bold cat ran lord of his clan surveys
Thence let her come—a God can hear from far—
And from this sore distress redeem my soul

Chorus

Mau re Apollo and Athena s might
Thou goest to perdition derelict
And damned no place for joy in thy lost soul
A calf bled white for fiends to munch a shadow
Answerest thou nothing? Art too sick with scorn
My fatling for my table sanctified
My dish not altar slain but eaten alive?
Hear then the bitter spell that binds thee fast

Come dance and song in linkèd round!
    More deep than blithe Muse can
We ll make these groaning chanters sound
    Our governance over Man!
No parley! Give us judgement swift!
We vex not in our wrath who spread
White hands to Heaven uplift
Not unto such he journeyeth
Unharmed a happy traveller
Through life to the last pause of Death
But to the froward soul that seeks,
Like *him* to cloak up if he could
Plague spotted hands with murder red
To such our apparition speaks
The faithful witness for the dead
Plenipotentiary of Blood
And Slaughter s sovran minister

Hear me my Mother! Hark
        Night in whose womb I lay
Born to punish dead souls in the dark
    And the living souls in the day!
Lo Leto s Lion-cub
    My right denies
He would take my slinking beast of the field
Mine mine by mother murder sealed
    My lawful sacrifice

But this is the song for the victim slain
To blight his heart and blast his brain
Wilder and wilder and whirl him along
This is the song the Furies song
    Not sung to harp or lyre
To bind men s souls in links of brass
And over their bodies to mutter and pass
    A withering fire!

Long the thread Fate spun
    And gave us to have and hold
For ever through all Time s texture run
    Our portion from of old
Who walks with murder wood
    With him walk we
On to the grave the deep-dug pit
And when he s dead he shall have no whit
    Too large a liberty!

Oh! this is the song for the victim slain
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To bind men s souls in links of brass
And over their bodies to mutter and pass
    A withering fire!

When as yet we were qui k in the womb
    This for our jointure was meted
And the Gods that know not Death s doom
    Are not at our table seated

With us they break no bread
    And of all their raiment shining
I wear nor thrum nor thread
    I will have no fane for my shrining!

But when Quarrel comes in at the gate
For the crashing of homes when Hate
Draweth his sword against kind
Ho! who shall our fleet feet bind?
Thou h he putteth his trust in his strength
The blood that is on him shall blind
And our arm overtake him at length!

Grave cares of public trust claim we
With sudden, swift aprearn.
Let help con ention set heaven free,
Discharged without a hearing,

For all the Tribe that come
Drenched blood of kin, curse-ridden,
Zeus sometimes their mouths they are dumb,
To his high parle unbidden.

But when Quarrel comes in at the gate
For the crashing of homes, when Hate
Draweth his sword against kind,
How to shall our fleet feet bend?
Though he putteth his trust in his strength,
The blood that is on him shall blind,
And our arm overtake him at length!

Glory of Man, to the azure day
Lifted in pomp, shall pass away
Crumbled to ashes, a glory discrowned,
When we come back Spirits sable gowned
Demon dancers, dour and dun,
That step to the tune of Malison!

A heavy leaper am I
And the feet of me shod with steel
Dust earth with doom from on high,
And the strong limbs quake and reel,
And the stride of the runner slackens full low
When I trample him down to the night of woe!

He falleth and wotteth no whit of his fall,
Withered and lost so sick a pall
Like pestilence hangs o'er the soul that hath sinned
And rumours wist, like sobbing wind,
Loud in the land of his blindness tell
And the stated house whereon Darkness fell.

A heavy leaper am I
And the feet of me shod with steel
Dust earth with doom from on high,
And the strong limbs quake and reel,
And the stride of the runner slacks full slow
When I trample him down to the night of woe!

A judgement may be stayed,
But it will come!
Skilled in tissues are we to our trade,
Perfect in mastery dom
Yea and therewith our memory is good
For all evil under the sun
To Man implacable much wooed,
But hardly won
Jealous of honours and fearsome,
Though by the Gods held in despite and scorn,
Sundered from them by the great sink of Hell
And sunless wells forlorn,
Where who hath eyes, and who hath none
Grope in one twilight over scarces and scars,
And evil are the ways and dusky set the stars.

What man that holds life dear
But bows the knee
In worship, yea and shuddering fear
Knowing that this must be?
By mine own lips admonished and advised
Of Power on Laws foundations laid
To me by olden Destiny devised
By God conveyed
An absolute gift? I am the inheritress
Of Time and hold my fief since Time has been
By very ancientry not honoured less,
Nor abject held and mean,
Though deep in ever-during shade
Under the sunny earth my mansion is,
And the thick Dark of the unlamped Abyss.

Enter ATHENA.

Athena. I heard a voice calling me when I chanced
On far Scamander's side to enfeoff me there
In my new land the which the kings and captains
Achaean quartered me from their war spoils,
Mine in eternal seisin absolute
But set apart, a gift to Theseus' sons.
Thence come I speeding not with way-worn foot,
Or wing but rapt on aegis rustling wide
My harnessed colts high-couraged and my car
And now this visitation, though I own
No touch of fear, presents a wonder to me.
In wonder's name who are ye? I say to all,
And to yon alien seated at mine image
Your like I know not among things create
Whether they be sights gazed on by the Gods
Or aught in the similitude of man.
But to revile deformity offends
Good neighbourhood and much reverts from justice.

Ch. Daughter of Zeus, I will in brief inform thee.
We are Night's children grey and grim and old
In Hell, our home called maledictions dire.

A. This tells your title and your lineage.

Ch. Thou art yet to know our state and our high charge.

A. Clearly expound and I shall quickly learn.

Ch. Man-slayers we drive forth from the homes of men.

A. Where is the bound set for the slayer's feet?

Ch. Where gladness is clean fallen out of fashion.

At. Is it in such wise ye beset yon man?

Ch. Yea he's deigned not to shed his mother's blood.

A. Under some strong constraint of menaced wrath

Ch. Where is the goad compels to mother murder?

A. There be twain here, and I have heard but one

Ch. He is not to be bound, he will not take an oath.

At. Ye would seem just, yet work iniquity

Ch. How? Tell me that! Thou art not poor in wisdom.

A. Wrong shall not triumph here by force of oaths.

Ch. Question him then and give a righteous judgement.

The swallowing earth shall yield it nevermore!
Thy life for hers thou shalt fill me a cup
    Drawn from those veins of thine
Deep draughts of jellied blood I will sip and sup
    Though bitter be the wine
And then when I have sucked thy life blood dry
    I ll drag thee down below!
There mother s son shall mother s agony
    Expiate throe for throe!
And thou shalt see all damned souls whilome
    Sinners gainst God or guest
Or parent and of each the righteous doom
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And when refrain But on this theme I am bid
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The spot of mother murder is washed white
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Was purged away with blood of slaughtered swine
Twere long to tell from that first hour all those
I have consorted with and harmed no man
Now with pure lips that can no more offend
I ask Athena Sovreign of this realm
To be my helper Hers are we then not won
In war myself my Argos and her people
By pact well kept her fedaries for ever
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Her foot advance or veil with flowing train
True friend of them she loves or Phlegra s flats
Like a bold cateran lord of his clan surveys
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But to the froward soul that seeks
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    My right denies
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And over their bodies to mutter and pass
    A withering fire!

When as yet we were quick in the womb
    This for our jointure was meted
And the Gods that know not Death s doom
    Are not at our table seated

With us they break no bread
    And of all their raiment shining
I wear nor thrum nor thread
    I will have no fane for my shrining!

But when Quarrel comes in at the gate
For the crashing of homes when Hate
Draweth his sword against kind
Ho! ho shall our fleet feet bind?
Though he putteth his trust in his strength
The blood that is on him shall blind
And our arm overtake him at length!

Grandeures of public trust claim we
With sudden, swift anear.
Let Hell's condemnation set her then free,
Debarred without a hearing.

For all the Tribe that come
Dropping blood of kin, curse-ridden,
Zeus stoppeth their mouths: they are dumb,
Their high parle unbidden.

But when Quarrel comes in at the gate
For the crashing of homes, when Hate
Draweth his sword against kind,
How shall our fleet feet bind?
Though he putteth his trust in his strength,
The blood that is on him shall blind,
And our arm overtake him at length!

Glory of Man, to the azure day
Lifted in pomp, shall pass away
Crumbled to ashes, glory discrowned,
When we come, black Spirits sable-gowned,
Demon dancers, dour and dun,
That step to the tune of Malison!

A lusty leaper am I
And the feet of me shod with steel
Down earth with doom from on high,
And the strong limbs quake and reel,
And the stride of the runner slackens full slow
When I trample him down to the night of woe!

He falleth and wotteth no whit of his fall,
Bewildered and lost, so sick a pall
Like pestilence hangs o'er the soul that hath
sinned;
And rumours — like a sobbing wind,
Loud of the land of his blindness tell
And the sad house whereon Darkness fell.

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Down earth with doom from on high,
And the strong limbs quake and reel,
And the stride of the runner slackens full slow
When I trample him down to the night of woe!

And fixed intent are we steeled,
But still come
Skilled craftsmen at work our trade,
Perfect in mastery
Yea, and through our memory is good
For all evil under the sun
To Man implacable much wooed,
Of him disdained, we run
Errands of honour indefeasible,
Though by the Gods held in despite and scorn,
Sundered from them by the great sunk of Hell
And sunless gloom forlorn.
Where who hath eyes and who hath none
Groping in one twilight over stones and scars,
And evil are the ways and dusky set the stars.

What man that holds life dear
But bows the knee
In worship, yea, and shuddering, fear
Knowing that thus must be?
By mine own lips admonished and advised
Of Power on Law's foundations laid
To me by olden Destiny devised,
By Gods confirmed,
An absolute gift? I am the inheritress
Of Time, and hold my fief since Time has been
By every one entry not honoured less,
Nor abject held and mean,
Though deep in ever-during shade
Under the sunny earth my mansion is,
And the thick Dark of the unlimned Abyss.

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On far Scamander's side, to enfeoff me there
In my new land, the which the kings and captains
Achæan quartered me from their war-spoils,
Mine in eternal seisin absolute,
But set apart, a gift to Theseus' sons.
Thence come I, speeding not with wayworn foot,
Or wing, but rapt on aegis rustling wide
My harnessed colts high-couraged and my car.
And now this station, though I own
No touch of fear, presents a wonder to me.
In wonder's name who are ye? I say to all,
And to you, man seated at mine altar,
Your like I know not among the creature
Whether they be spirits gazed on by the Gods
Or aught in the similitude of man.
But to revile deformity offends
Good neighbourhood and much revolts from
justice.
Ch. Daughter of Zeus, I will in brief inform thee.
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Ch. Where gladness is learn fa... en out of fashion.
At. Is it in such wise ye beset yon man?
Ch. Yea, he is deemed not to shed his mother's
blood.
A. Under some strong constraint of menaced
wrath?
Ch. Where is the goad compel to mother murder?
A. There be twain here, and I have heard but one.
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Drawn from those veins of thine
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Though bitter be the wine
And then when I have sucked thy life blood dry
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Sinners gainst God or guest
Or parent and of each the righteous doom
Shall be by thee witnessed!
For Hades is a jealous Judge of Men
And in His Black Assize
The record writ with ghostly pen
Cons with remorseless eyes

Or I am made perfect in the rule of Sorrow
By oft occasions schooled know when to speak
And when refrain But on this theme I am bid
By a most wise Preceptor ope my lips
The blood from off this hand fades fallen on sleep
The spot of mother murder is washed white
That when twas fresh on Divine Phoebus hearth
Was purged away with blood of slaughtered swine
Twere long to tell from that first hour all those
I have consorted with and harmed no man
Now with pure lips that can no more offend
I ask Athena Sovreign of this realm
To be my helper Hers are we then not won
In war myself my Argos and her people
By pact well kept her fedaries for ever
If she about the parts of Libya
Round Triton s rapid river her natal stream
Her foot advance or veil with flowing train
True friend of them she loves or Phlegra s flats
Like a bold cateran lord of his clan surveys
Thence let her come—a God can hear from far—
And from this sore distress redeem my soul

Chorus

Maugre Apollo and Athena s might
Thou goest to perdition derelict
And damned no place for joy in thy lost soul
A calf bled white for fiends to munch a shadow
Answerest thou nothing? Art too sick with scorn
My fatling for my table sanctified
My dish not altar slain but eaten alive?
Hear then the bitter spell that binds thee fast

Come dance and song in linkèd round!
More deep than blithe Muse can
We ll make these groaning chanters sound
Our governance over Man!
No parley! Give us judgement swift!
We vex not in our wrath who spread
White hands to Heaven uplift
Not unto such he journeyeth
Unharmed a happy traveller
Through life to the last pause of Death
But to the froward soul that seeks,

Like *him* to cloak up if he could
Plague spotted hands with murder red
To such our apparition speaks
The faithful witness for the dead
Plenipotentiary of Blood
And Slaughter s sovran minister

Hear me my Mother! Hark
Night in whose womb I lay
Born to punish dead souls in the dark
And the living souls in the day!
Lo Leto s Lion cub
My right denies
He would take my slinking beast of the field
Mine mine by mother murder sealed
My lawful sacrifice

But this is the song for the victim slain
To blight his heart and blast his brain
Wilder and wilder and whirl him along
This is the song the Furies song
Not sung to harp or lyre
To bind men s souls in links of brass
And over their bodies to mutter and pass
A withering fire!

Long the thread Fate spun
And gave us to have and hold
For ever through all Time s texture run
Our portion from of old
Who walks with murder wood
With him walk we
On to the grave the deep-dug pit
And when he s dead he shall have no whit
Too large a liberty!

Oh! this is the song for the victim slain
To blight his heart and blast his brain
Wilder and wilder and whirl him along!
This is the song the Furies song
Not sung to harp or lyre
To bind men s souls in links of brass
And over their bodies to mutter and pass
A withering fire!

When as yet we were quick in the womb
This for our jointure was meted
And the Gods that know not Death s doom
Are not at our table seated

With us they break no bread
And of all their raiment shining
I wear nor thrum nor thread
I will have no fane for my shrining!

But when Quarrel comes in at the gate
For the crashing of homes when Hate
Draweth his sword again t kind
Ho! ho shall our fleet feet bind?
Though he putteth his trust in his strength
The blood that is on him shall blind
And our arm overtake him at length!

Gra e cares of public trust cla m we
With sudden wift appear n
Let hell s contention set hea en free
Discharged without a hear ng

For all the Tribe that come
Dropp ng blood fk n curse ridden
Zeus st ppeth the r mouths they are dumb
To his high parle unbidd n

But when Quarrel comes in t the gate
For the crash ng of homes when Hate
Draw th h swo d gainst kind
Ho! who shall our fle t f et bi d?
Tho gh he putteth hi trust in his strength
The blood that i on him shall blind
And o rtarm vertake h m at length!

Glory of Man to the a ure day
Lifted in pomp shall pass way
Crumbled to a he a glo y discrowned
When we com bla k Spi ts sable gowned
Dem n dancers, do r and dun
That st p to the tune of M lison!

A lusty leaper am I
And the f et of m shod with steel
Dint earth w th doom from n h h
And the str ng limb quake and reel
And the str d f the ru nn lacke s f ll slow
Whe I trample h m do n t the ght of w oe!

He fall th nd wotteth no wh t of h s fall
B wildered and lost so s ck a pall
Like pest l n e hangs e the soul that hath
sin ed
And rum rs w st l k sobb ng w nd
Loud the l d of h bl ndn s tell
And th stat ly ho se wh re n Darkness fell.

A lusty leape m I
And the fe t f m shod with teel
Dint ea th w th doom fr m hi h
And the tr g limbs qu k r l,
And the r de f th unn r lacke s f ll slow
When I t mpl him down to the n ht f woe!

Ay Judg e nt may be tayed
B t t ll om !
Shall d eraf sm n t we at our trad
P rl et in ma r rdom!
Yea nd th re ith ou m mo y good
F ll th e lu fer th un
To M umpl cabl much wooed
B t ha dly w n!
Jeal f h u s ndefea bl
Though by th God h ld in despite a d sc rn
S ndered from them by the great i k of Hell
And s nless g lls fo l n
Wh r who hath yes and wh h th one
Grope i one twil ht o e sc es a d scars
And ll are the ways a d dusky set the stars.

What man that holds life dear"
But bows the knee
In worship yea and shuddering fear
Kno ving that this must be?
By mine own l ps admonished and advised
Of Power on Law s foundations laid
To me by olden Dest ny demised
By Gods con eyed
An absolute gift? I am the inheritress
Of Time and hold my fief s nce Time has been
By ery ancientry not honoured less
Nor abject held and mean
Though deep in ever-during shade
Under the su ny earth my m nsion is,
And the thick Dark of the unlamped Abyss.

Enter ATHENA

Athena I heard a vo ce calling me when I chanced
On far Scamander s side t enfeoff me there
In my new land the wh ch the kings and capta ns
Achæa q art red me from their war spoils
Mine in et rnal se in absolute
But set apart a gift to Theseu sons
Thence come I peeding not w th way worn foot
Or wing but rapt on æg s rustl ng wide
My harnes ed colts h h-couraged and my car
And now tl is is tati n th ugh I own
No touch of fear p esents a wonder to me
In wonde s n me who are ye? I say to all
And to yon al en seated at m ne image
Y ur l ke I known t among things create
Wh ther they be sights gazed on by the Gods
Or aught n the sim litude of man.
B t to revile deformity offends
Good ne ghbourhood and much rev lts from
ju tice

Ch Daughter f Zeus I w ll in br f inform thee.
We are Night s ch ldren g y d grim and old
In Hell our home called m ledict o s dire
At Tl tells your title and your h ra e
Ch Thou art yet to know our state and our high
charge
At Clearly e pound and I shall quickly learn
Ch Man slayers we dri e f rth f om the homes
of men
At Where is the bound set for th slaye s f et?
Ch Whe gl d ess is clean fallen out of fa l n
At Is it in su h w se ye beset yon ma ?
Ch Yea he s deigned not to shed his motl r s
blood
At U de some str ng constraint of menaced
w ath?
Ch Wh re is the goad compels t m ther murder?
At Th e be twain t ere and I ha e heard but one
Ch He i not to be bound he w ll not tak an oath
At Ye w uld se m just yet wo k iniquity
Ch How? T ll me that! Thou art not poor in
w sdom
At Wro g shall t t umph here by force of
oaths
Ch Questi n him then and g ve a righteous
j dgment

At What? Would ye leave the issue in my hands?
Ch Yea for Thine own worth and Thy wor-
shipful Sire
At Sir what hast thou to answer touching this?
Tell me thy land thy lineage and all
Thy griefs and then speak in thine own defence
If that thou look st for judgement for that cause
Harbourest at my hearth all rites performed
A grave appellant like Ixion old
Come to all this make me your clear reply

Or Sovran Athena thou hast kept till last
A grave misgiving I shall first dispel
I am no suppliant under ban I come not
To clasp Thine image with polluted hands
Proof mighty will I offer thereanent
By law the blood stained murderer must be mute
Till one with power to cleanse strike over him
The sacrificial blood of sucking swine
Long since in homes not ours have we been purged
With all due rites dumb beast and running stream
Thus I resolve Thy doubt By birth I am
Argive my sire— tis well thou askest me—
Was Agamemnon Admiral of the sea
With whom thou didst dispeople Ilium
Yea unstate Troy Returned to his own house
Foully he fell by my black hearted mother
Cut down ta en netted in the trammelling toils
That bare grim witness of his bloody bath
I *then an exile presently returned*
And killed my mother—I deny it not—
In murderous revenge for my dear father
And Loxias with me is answerable
Who spake of torments dire to goad my heart
Except I dealt with them after their guilt
Judge Thou if I have justly done or no
Whate er Thy doom in Thee I rest content
At If any man think he can judge herein
'Tis much too weighty neither were it lawful
That I try murder wreaked in bitter wrath
And namely when thou com st a sacrosanct
Suitor aneled and hurtless to my house
Preferred withal as guiltless to my realm
While these hold powers not easily dismissed
And if they triumph not in the event
Poison of hurt pride will fall presently
And the land ail with age long pestilence
So stands it whether they stay or I bid them hence
I shall find trouble and perplexity
But since so jump the business comes this way
I will appoint a court for murder sworn
And make it a perpetual ordinance
Call up your witnesses bring in your proofs
Justice sworn helpers and oath bounden aids
The prime in worth I ll choose from out my sons
And come and well *and truly try the cause*
By the unswerving tenour of their troth *Exit*

Chorus

Now comes the crack of doom by strong
Subversive stroke of rebel laws
If he have room to plead his wrong
And justice vindicate his cause
Whose hands are stained with his mother s blood
This knits all in one brotherhood
The easy fellowship of crime
And from this instance loom in long array
Blood boltered parents whom their sons shall slay
Down the dark glimpses of disordered Time
And we that wont to watch mankind
That thirst for cups incarnadined
No more our anger shall unleash
I ll give Death leave to slay all flesh
And each shall prophesy his own
Doom from his neighbour s fate foreknown
All comers then from the world s ends
They shall accost in search of some relief
And learn from ashy lips and looks of grief
Such feeble physic as despair commends

Who reeleth then go the fatal blow
Let him look not for redress
Nor bootless clamour Justice Ho!
Ho the Thron d Erinyes!

Fathers mothers let your loud
Death wound shriek shrill through your
halls
For a mightier frame is bowed
Yea the House of Justice falls

There is a place for Fear she tries
The reins a warder weariless
And it is well with tear and sighs
To follow after Soothfastness

What man what power through the wide earth
Whose soul is not with child of Fear
Nor tends her as a blessed birth
Can be of Law true worshipper?

Let not thy heart commend
Life without Law nor lend
Thy fulsome breath to fan a tyrant s lust
God doth to power advance
Though His wise governance
Change with the shifting forms of things the
comely
Mean and just

Hark how my graver rhyme
To that just Mean keeps time
From Godlessness springs Pride the Prodigal
But he that doth possess
Soul s health hath Happiness
The child of many prayers the best beloved of
all

Lay to thy heart this law
O Man stand thou in awe
Of Justice Altar not for any lure
Or glitter of false gain
Plant there thy foot profane
To tread it in the dust for chastisement is sure.

The deed i done but thence
Ensues the conseq ence
That crowns, completes, the master stroke of all
Honour ye sons of men
Your parents first and then
The guest that goeth in and out the stran er in
your hall.

So virtuous a I would ha e thee be
of tue ht, by no compul on o erborne,
Thou canst not wholl miss Felicity
Nor ever founder utterl forlorn
B t this I say who enturous! put forth
And e ery law of Ri hteousness outbraves,
His trash, his traffic got eath evil stars,
In th dread Da of Wrath,
H shall commit t the devouring wa es.
When splits the sail and splintered are the spars.

Then at deaf ears his cry unheard shall knock,
Swoon in gulfs wh r none t land may win
L earth lau ter shall hi summons mock
Whose soul is fu l for the fires f Sin.
H boas ed h would never see that da
But now his An el sees him weak nd spent
Powerless to top those seas nd all his teen
And tra el ast wa
On th uncharted reel f Just rent
H sinks with none t wail him and t n more seen.

The A eo agus

At Make proclamation, herald keep the p ess
f k
And let the bra en trump Tyrrhenian
That beard in Hea en filled w th th man s
b eath,
Sound in t public ear r gh y purl
For ul th synod fills m Jud ement Hall
There must be silen so that th hol enim
Learn m commandments etla u l
And these, m hosen, that th jud aright

Enter ᴘᴏʟʟᴏ.

Ch Apollo king O er what Thou bear rule!
Say wherefore rt Thou com to medd here?
Ap First I m om t testif for e
He her a suitor and suppliant
Of mine hi blood-guilt I did purg nd cleanse.
Next I am n th bill, m self arraigned
For th ma m h murder
(*T* THE) Call th case
And as thou knowes hon maintain th Right.
At (*T the FU*) The word th you the
trial ma p oceed
And t sound h nd p t c both, that he
Who i h pref th har hall first begin.
Ch Though we be man shall use few words.
Do thou make nswer *I q* estion thee.
And t ll us fir f thou did st sla th mothe
Or Yea I mak denial I killed her
Ch So, in this three encounter on round ends.
Or Y ha not thrown your man ye crow too
soon.

Ch No matter how was t thou didst take her
life?
Or I answer—w th m sword I cut her throat
Ch By whom seduced? Whose ill admonishment?
Or At His behest H mself is witness for me
Ch The Proph t bade thee murder thine own
mother?
Or E en so and t this hour I ru it not
Ch N t? But a pebb e-cast may chan e thy tune.
Or I ha e my fait my sire sends help from his
gra e
Ch What! K ll th mother and put trust in ghosts!
Or Sh was a persed with two-fold villa ny
Ch How can that be? I charge thee tell the
court
Or She slew her husband and struck down my
fath r
Ch Thou li st but she is quit by her bloody
death
Or Why did e not hunt her wh le yet she l ed?
Ch She was not of one blood with him she slew
Or Am I accounted of my moth r s blood?
Ch Thou gory villa n was n t th bod framed
Fed in h r womb? W lt thou d ny thy moth r?
Or Do Thou bear w tness for me now pronounce
Apollo, f I slew her with just cause
For that twas don I have and do confess
B t whether j tl done or no, do Thou
G sentence that the court may hear me plead.
A To ou Athena s great Consi tory
Justl I ll spea nd withal trut fully
F r that I am prophet and li ot
My th one of Di ination n ver yet
To man nor woman, no nor pol ty
Deli ered a ht b t I was bidden speak
By Zeus, the Fath r of the Olympian Gods.
Weigh w ll th for e of that e Counsel ors,
And then ensue the thi m F ther w lls
F r Zeus i of more mi ht than all oaths else
Ch Zeus, then thou say st d li ered the oracle
That bad O estes en h s fathe death
And eckon not the cost of mother s life?
Ap Far other was the murder f man
Nobl by God en sc ptre hi h exalt
At the hands of a woman n t with valiant
A ow f ped b rcher Amazon
But in s h w se a thou shalt hear Pallas,
And y u upo whose ote the rd er ha
Whe from wa busi ess prosperou n th main
He was retu ned she ga e him lo i w l om
H took his bath, and when his bath was done
Sh wrapped him in a cloak, a slee eless obe
And in ts ha klin mazes hewed him down.
This was the ma n of his taki off
The majesty of the world, t e l rd of ships
And such was the oh lay it to your hearts,
Ye judges, that ar set to try the cause.
Ch Zeus, thou pr t ndest h ld father s life
P ecious ex eeding l and et Himself
Cast his own Father Cronos into chains!
Why is not th s confoundin contraries?
Mark well his gument I conjure you!

Ap You worse than beasts! You hag seed
God abhorred!
Bonds He may loose for durance find a balm
And work howso He please deliverance
But when the dust hath drunk the blood of man
And he s once dead there s no uprising spell
For that my Father hath created not
Though saving only this the frame of things
Is as a wheel He can revolve at will
And nothing scant of breath turn upside-down
Ch A sorry plea look you to save your man!
Shall he that spilt his mother s his own blood
Live here in Argos in his father s house?
What public altars think you will he use?
Who will admit him to the Holy Stoup?
Ap Listen and thou shalt own my deeper lore
To be called mother is no wise to be
Parent but rather nurse of seed new sown
The male begets she s host to her small guest
Preserves the plant except it please God blight it
I ll furnish reasons for my argument
There hath been and there can be fatherhood
Though there should be no mother witness here
Olympian Zeus own self created child
That grew not in the womb s dark coverture
A branch so goodly never Goddess bore
Pallas as it hath ever been my care
To make thy city great famous thine arms
I have sent thee this sitter on thy hearth
That he may be Thy true man evermore
And Thou Goddess may st count him Thine ally
And all his seed and to remotest age
These men s sons may keep Thy covenant
At Shall I direct them now to cast their votes
As conscience dictates? Hath enough been said?
Ch We have shot every arrow from our bow
Nothing remains but to abide the event
At Surely (*To* APOLLO *and* ORESTES) And how
shall I do right by you?
Ap Ye have heard what ye have heard think
on your oaths
Carry to the urn the verdict of your hearts
At Ye men of Athens hear my law ye judges
That try this cause the first for man s blood shed
Henceforth to Aegeus congregated host
This Court shall be an ordinance for ever
This Hill of Ares once a place of arms
Where leaguering Amazons pitched their tents
what time
They warred with Theseus and their jealous towers
New raised against our sovran citadel
And sacrificed to Ares whence the Rock
Is called the Rock Areian There shall Awe
With civil Fear her kinsman night and day
Perpetual sessions hold to punish wrong
If that my sons depart not from my law
For an thou foul the spring with flood or mire
The fresh and sparkling cup thou It find no more
Nor anarchy nor arbitrary power
Would I have Athens worship or uphold
Nor utterly banish Fear from civic life.
For who is virtuous except he fear?
This seat of Awe kept ever formidable
Shall be a wall a bulwark of salvation
Wide as your land as your imperial state
None mightier in the habitable world
From Scythia to the parts of the Peloponnese.
A Place of Judgement incorruptible
Compassionate yet quick in wrath to wake
And watch while Athens sleeps I stablish here.
My large discourse these precepts would commend
To my sons yet unborn Rise from your seats
Take up your counters and upon your oaths
Return a righteous verdict I have done

The Judges cast their votes during the ensuing dialogue

Ch Take heed we are ungentle visitors
Learn of our wisdom and misprise us not
Ap My words that are God s Voice hold ye in awe
Make them not as blind plants that bear no fruit
Ch Thou hallowest deeds of blood that are not
Thine
And shalt no more prophesy holy things
Ap Faileth the Father s Wisdom for that He
Sheltered Ixion the first murderer?
Ch Thou sayest but if I am baulked of justice
I ll vex this land and visit it in wrath
Ap The younger Gods regard thee not the old
Pay thee no honour victory is mine
Ch So didst thou sometime deal in Pheres house
Tempting the Fates to make mankind immortal
Ap Is it not just to help a worshipper
And doubly trebly just in the day of need?
Ch Thou didst break down earth s parcelled
governance
With new wine practise on the Goddesses old
Ap Nay when the cause is lost thy venom void
It hath no power to hurt thine adversaries
Ch Since Thy hot youth o er rides our ancientry
I wait on judgement doubtful yet to launch
My indignation gainst the State of Athens
At It shall be mine if judgement hang in poise
To cast this counter that Orestes live
Mother is none that gave my Godhead life
I am the male s saving my never wed
Virginity my Father s child thrice o er
Therefore I rate not high a woman s death
That slew her lord the master of her house
Orestes wins yea though the votes be paired
Come Sirs despatch ye whose the office is
To make an end empty me out the urns
Or Phoebus Apollo how will judgement go?
Ch Swarth Night my Mother watchest Thou
unseen?
Or I near mine end the halter or the day!
Ch We fall or have great glory evermore!
Ap Sirs count the votes make strictest scrutiny
With holy fear lest Judgement go awry
A vote o er looked may work most grievous wrong
A single pebble save a tottering house

A pause

At The accused is found not guilty of the
charge
The tellers certify an equal count

Or. O Pallas! O Preserver of my race!
To m lost realm my father once possessed
Thou hast restored me! Now shall all Greece say
"True Son of Argos, lord of h s father s substance
H dwelleth w th his own. Pallas wrou ht this
And Loxias and the Almighty Third
Th S viour Moved b m ster s fate He saw
And sa ed from them that p ed my mother s cause.
Now e er I go to mine own house I swear
U to Thy land and all Th host an oath
Succeedi ages shall fulfil no prince
Of earth shall carry here the barbed spear
When we are in our gra es we will confound
Who break this oath with sorry mishap enture
Their ays be weariness, their paths forbid
And for their rash e th y shall eap but ruth.
B t if they shall keep faith gird them w h m ht
For Pallas city we will show them grace.
Goddess, farewell be matchless still in arms,
Find still a valiant peopl stron to throw
All who rise p against Thee keep Thee safe
And with their sword win for Thee ictory!

Exit.

Ch. Oh, ye young Gods! Ye ha e ridden the old laws down, ye ha e reft
My prey and I am left
Dishonoured and undon !
B t for these pangs
Athens shall ha e m malison!
A on these lips th e hangs
(Ho, Vengea ce, soon t shed)
A venomed drop f m heart s agony!
And t shall mul l d spread
B t er and barren It shall be
A mildew nd leprosy
A canker to th lea ess tree
A curse t the bud ess bed
On everythin that hath breath
Corrosion, purulence and death!
Wail—and wail—and wail
Or witch them? Shadowing their land w th bale?
Transmute t unimaginable woe
Grief unsupportabl Oho.
Ye Virgin Dau hters t black Midni ht born
How sharp your sorrow! How is our honour shorn!

A. Na take t not with such a hea y heart
Y are not anquished equal re th votes
In simple truth not th disparagement.
Oh, here were proof radiant w th God s own li ht!
And H that g the oracl bare witness
Orestes should not suffer for his deed
Let not our hea y wrath li ht on this ground
Consider be not angry shed no dr s
To blast the fruitful earth with barren ess
And with keen tooth d our th pregnant seed.
I s pro ide o pledg beret my oath,
A bold, hollow in this righteous land,
Altars nd sum thrones wh e shall sit,
And wor hip and great honour from her sons.

Ch. Oh! e oun God Y ha e ridden the old law down, ha eft
My prey and I am left
Dishonoured and undone!
But for these pangs
Athens shall ha e my malison!
Ay on these lips there hangs
(Ho, Ven eance soon to shed)
A venomed drop of my heart s agony!
And it shall multiply and spread
B tter and barren it shall be
A mildew and a leprosy
A c ker to the leafless tree
A curse to the ch ld ess bed
On e erything that hath breath
Corrosion purulence and death!
W il—and wail—and wail!
Or witch them? Shadowing their land with bale?
Transmute to unimaginable woe
Grief supportable? Oho.
Ye Virgin Da hters to black Midni ht born
How sharp your sorrow! How is yo r honour shorn!

At. You honour is safe are e not Goddesses
Curse not this soil that giveth life to man
I too have faith in Zeus but why was e words?
I only know the keys of the arsenal
Of Heaven, stored with the sealed thunderbolt.
B t we shall need no thunder Li en to me
Vent no wild word in your despite, to make
All that y elds ncrease utterly miscarry
This da k wa es bitt r fury put to sleep
Be what y are majestic denizens
With me n this fair land pr m offerings
Shall then be yours throu h all her borders wid
For child en and the sacred marriage rite
For ev rmore, and ye shall bless my words.

Ch. Oho! Am I to take these buffets, I
T ha m elder wisdom scoffed t be
Bid to my place, to house with infamy
Here on this plot this patch, this ll of earth?
Blast t, my fury! Pain pain, pain
Here t my heart—whence comes t? Why
Am I to suffer? Darkness, Death and Dearth!
N ht, Mo her N ht shall m wroth heart be hot
And wilt thou hearken not?
Stron craft of subtle God hath r ft my ancient majesty!

At. I will be patient with thy passioning
Thou art min lder wiser then than I
Y t Zeus hath not denied me understanding
F nd out new race oth r soil t here
Your heart will be I speak this for your warning
The tid of Tim shall for my people roll
W th er mantling glory thou shalt ha e
Th mansion her hard by Erectheus house,
And men and women come with frequent pomp
And great r laud than th wide world can g e.
But n my borders bri no gnodery
To whet harp daggers in the breast f Youth
Bloody and dangerous with more mad ess edged
Than works with wicked ferment in new win
Nor tak as ewere the gamecock heart t plant
Domestic H ac here that fights w th kind.
W hout their gates let m sons go to ar
And wh lo es honour shall ha e all he cra es.

Your bantam bully ruffler of the yard
Arrides me not and I will none of him
Take thou thy choice and take it from my hand
Fair service fair content fair recompense
A portion in this realm the Gods love most
Ch Oho! am I to take these buffets I
To have mine elder wisdom scoffed at be
Bid to my place to house with Infamy
Here on this plot this patch this ell of earth!
Blast it my fury! Pain pain pain
Here at my heart! Whence comes it? Why
Am I to suffer? Darkness Death and Dearth!
Night Mother Night shall my wroth heart be hot
And wilt thou hearken not?
Strong craft of subtle gods hath reft my ancient majesty
At Still will I bless *thou shalt not weary me*
Nor say my nonage set thy years at nought
Nor churlish men scorned thy Divinity
And drave thee from their gates discomfited
If thou hold sacred the sweet Soul of Reason
If there be any virtue any balm
Upon these lips thou wilt remain If not
Though thou should st cast all anger in the scale
To sink the land all malice all despite
It is not justly done Justice gives thee
A realm to share a rich inheritance
And nothing of thine honour takes away
Ch Athena Queen what mansion wilt Thou give me?
At One where Grief cometh not accept it thou
Ch An if I do what honour shall I have?
At This that no home shall prosper without thee
Ch But hast Thou power to make thy promise good?
At We will establish him that worships thee
Ch Wilt Thou assure me this for evermore?
At I promise not except I can perform
Ch Methinks Thy magic works I am no more wroth
At Possess the land and thou shalt win its love
Ch What shall I sing that hath a blessing in it?
At A song to celebrate a cause well won
From the sweet earth from the sea dews and damps
From skies and winds ask inspirations airs
That travel on over a sunlit land
Fruit from the ground and increase of strong cattle
For all my sons that Time can never tire
And saving Health for seed of human kind
Natheless on Virtue chiefly shed thy balm
Like a wise gardener of the Soul I hold
There is no graft nor bud blooms half so fair
And this is thine but thou shalt leave to me
Glory of battle where the cause is just
Death but death garlanded with victory
And grudge if I be found herein remiss
Ch Pallas home contenteth me
Honour to the strong citie
Zeus Almighty made His own
And Ares armèd strength sustains
A fortress for the Gods of Greece
A jewel flashing forth anew
When ravished were her costly fanes
And her high altars overthrown
Breathe on her blessings breathe the dew
Of prayer Earth yield her thine increase
Shine thou rejoicing Sun and speed
All nature sends and mortals need!
At Not that I cherish Athens less
But that I love her well have I
Throned in her midst Great Goddesses
Spirits hard to pacify
All that makes up Man s moving story
Is theirs to govern and dispense
He whom their hard hand ne er made sorry
Who hath not met them on his way
Walking in blindness knows not whence
The shock that beats him to his knees
The sin of some forgotten day
Delivers up his soul to these
Destruction like a voiceless ghost
Silenceth all his empty boast
And minisheth his glory
Ch I will have nor storm nor flood
Scathe her vines and olive bowers
No scorching wind shall blind the bud
In the waking time of flowers
By my grace all airs that blow
Their appointed bounds shall know
No distemper blast her clime
With perpetual barrenness
Flocks and herds in yeaning time
Pan shall with twin offspring bless
And Earth s wombèd wealth God sealed
All its lucky ingots yield
At Warders of Athens have ye heard
Her voice? Know ye what these things mean?
Wist ye how mighty is the word
Erinys spake the Queen?
Mighty mid deathless Gods her crying
Mid Powers that Hell s hid glooms invest
And in this world of living dying
Mighty and manifest!
She biddeth one make melody
And one down dark ways leadeth She
Blinded with tears undrying
Ch Untoward and untimely Doom
Bring not strong Youth to his death bed
Ye maidens in your beauty bloom
Live not unloved nor die unwed
You Heavenly Pair this good gift grant
Grant it ye Elder Destinies
Our Sisters whom one Mother bare
Spirits whose governance is law
Of every home participant
And at all seasons foul or fair
Just Inmates Righteous Presences
Shadows of an Unseen Awe
Over the wide earth and the deep seas
Honoured above all Deities
At Oh bounty dealt with loving hand!
It needs must fill my heart with glee
Such largesse lavished on my land
Wise Spirit thanks to thee

Son of Counsel, suave and holy
Whose sober cou[nsel] lead me on
Th[ough th]e st[ubb]orn w[i]ll [h]eld slowly
Yet the[ir] wild hearts were won!
But Zeus, the Lord of Civic Life,
Gave victory in this noble strife
H[ere]. Good triumph[e]d!
Ch. Then [th]e [s]tarved Fa[c]tion fed
On the meat of human woe,
Filled but ever surfeited
Come not hither grow[i]n[g] low
Nor [d]rink Athens with th[y] roar
Never be this thirsty ground
Drunk with fratricidal blood,
Nor lust of Power insinuate
Strife at [th]e [en]trance evermore.
Love fellowship of Good
Each be t[o] his [n]e[ig]hbour bound.
One in love and one in hat[e]
For such grace, w[h]ere'er 'tis found
Lays the balm to man['s] wound.
At. Are they not wise? Speaks sh[e] not fair?
Her tongue of gold makes counsel sweet
And pou[rs] th[e] harm[o]ny [w]he[r]e
Soft words and Wisdom meet
Mine eyes see [vi]sions fa[ir] foundation
Rise round these form[s] with fury fr[aug]ht!
Serve them: Bri[ng] them your rich oblations,
And [d]eserve not for nought
Bless them, and they will s[h]ed b[l]ess
Athens to [en]rich [and] Ri[gh]teousness,
Renown through[o]ut all nations.
Ch. Joy t[o] you, joy and all good things!
Joy t[o] th[e] fortun[es] t[h]at lies
With Zeus about her and who
Vowed t[o] th[e] Unmarried Maiden love
And in th[e] dawn of Time make wise,
Whom Pallas covers with her wings
And the F[ath]er succours.
At. Joy t[o y]ou too in amplest stor[e]
B[u]t [i]s time I go befor[e]
I lead [y]ou on your road
And b[e] our escort [w]ho [li]ght
Conduct [y]ou throu[gh] th[e] Shades of N[ig]ht
Down [t]o your da[rk] Abo[de].
Set forward the[n] our priestl[y] train
Speed them with blood [o]f victims sla[i]n
Under this [h]o[ly] ground,
Bind whatsoever br[ings] [wit]h death.

And whatsoever profiteth
B[e] by your spell u[n]bound.
As [ye] help Athens by your charms
Sh[e] shall be great in arts and arms,
Still, still w[i]th victory crowned!
Lead on [ye] sons of Cranaus
For those that make their home with us
A path and passa[ge] find
And by their good gifts freel[y] gi[v]en,
B[e] these sweet charities of Hea[v]en
B[e] all men of on[e] mind!
Ch. Joy, joy to Athens! Oh, twice blest
B[e] all that in her borders dw[e]ll,
Or be they men of mortal mould
Or deathless Deities that hold
Pallas' rock built citadel!
Lo[v]e me that am [y]our Sacred Guest
And bid to Grief [a] long farewell!
At. Tak[e] all my tha[n]ks m[y] heart goes with
your pra[y]ers.
Myself will lead you by the torches' blaze
Down to your habitation neath the earth
With these m[y] ministrants round my Statue
On d[u]tyous watch th[e] ap[ple] of the eye
O[f] Theseus land, [a] famous compan[y]
Of Little ones and w[iv]es and beldames old.
We[']ll mantl[e] them in cloaks of scarl[e]t fine
And all about them shake the bri[g]ht fireshine,
G[iv]e these New Dwellers nob[le] w[e]lcome,
That good [to] men from their goodwill may [co]me.
Escort. Pass on [y]our wa[y] ye mi[g]hty
Y[e] Jealous in honour pass on,
Children [o]f N[ig]ht unbegotten,
Seed of her womb unsown,
With pomp and triumph and hol[y] mirth,
(Hush! Good words, all y[e] peop[le]!)
And pra[y]er and sacrifice descend
Down t[o] th[e] dark dismal earth.
(Hush! Good word[s a]ll ye people!)
Come ye M[a]jest[ic] Spirits, come
Bri[ng] good lu[c]k to your new found home
B[y] the glad bri[g]ht li[g]ht of the human brand!
(Cry, cry aloud with jubilee!)
Pea[ce] t[o] thee and peace t[o] thee
And peace for ever in Pallas' land!
Partnered with happy Destiny
All see[ing] Zeus hath wrou[gh]t t[o] this end!
(Cry, cry aloud with jubilee!)

Exeunt

THE PLAYS OF
SOPHOCLES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sophocles, c. 495–406 B.C.

Sophocles was born at Colonus in Attica around 495 B.C. His father, Sophillus, was a maker of munitions. That Sophillus himself worked as a smith or carpenter, as has sometimes been said, seems unlikely in view of his son's social position and choice of offices. According to Pliny, Sophocles was born in the highest station. This tradition gains support from the story that at the age of fifteen or sixteen he led the Boys' Chorus which celebrated with song and the music of the lyre the victory of Salamis.

As a schoolboy Sophocles was already famous for his beauty and won prizes in athletics and literature. He was taught music by Lamprus, whom Plutarch praised for sobriety and preferred to the more extravagant and realist Timotheus, who influenced Euripides in his late choruses.

From the ancient *Life* which is probably of Alexandrian origin, and from references in other authors, it is evident that Sophocles both as poet and as citizen played a prominent and varied role in the life of Athens. His own life was co-extensive with the rise and fall of the city. Between his birth a few years before Marathon and his death on the eve of the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, the greatest events of Athenian history took place. During that time Sophocles wrote and produced over one hundred and twenty plays. In 443, as president of the imperial treasury, he was in charge of collecting the tribute of the allies. In 440 he was elected general and served with Pericles in the Samian War. He went on embassies, and he was probably the Sophocles referred to by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* as one of the ten elders chosen to manage the affairs of the city after the Sicilian disaster. He was a friend of Cimon and a member of his social circle, which included the distinguished foreigners Ion of Chios, the tragic poet, and the painter Polygnotus. Among other friends of Sophocles were Archelaus and Herodotus, to whom he wrote elegiac poems.

Plutarch, in his *Life of Cimon*, says that Sophocles won his first victory with the first play he produced. His first victory came in 468 when he defeated Aeschylus with the *Triptolemus*, which is now lost. He was thus twenty-seven when he began his public dramatic career. In the remaining sixty-two years of his life he wrote on an average two plays a year and competed for the tragic prize thirty-one times. He won at least eighteen victories and was never placed third.

Of the seven plays that survive, the *Ajax* is probably the earliest. The *Antigone* belongs to 443 or 441. The chronological order of the *Trachiniae* and the *Oedipus the King* is uncertain; the *Electra* is later, and all three are assigned to the years between 435 and 410. The *Philoctetes* is known to have been produced in 408, when Sophocles was eighty-seven years old. The *Oedipus at Colonus*, according to the story made famous by the *De Senectute* of Cicero, was Sophocles' last play. Sophocles is supposed to have been accused by his son of being unable to manage his property, and to have convinced his judges of his competence by reciting a chorus from this play which he had just completed.

Aristotle says in the *Poetics* that Sophocles raised the number of actors to three and added scene-painting. Sophocles is also said to have written his plays with certain actors in mind and not to have acted in them himself because of the weakness of his voice. That he was interested in the theory as well as the practice of dramatic art is evident from his having written a book "on the chorus," and having formed a "company of the educated" in honor of the Muses. "Chorus" was the official name for tragedy, and a book on the chorus would have dealt presumably with all aspects of the tragic poet's art. The "company of the educated" was probably a society of cultivated Athenians who met to discuss poetry and music, though it has also been suggested that its members were actors who had been trained by Sophocles.

Sophocles died in 406 B.C., as we know from the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, brought out in the following year. His epitaph, attributed to Simmias, the friend of Socrates, honors his learning and wisdom and calls him the favorite of the Graces and the Muses." While Aeschylus and Euripides visited the courts of foreign kings and died abroad, Sophocles never left home except in the service of the city, and died where he had lived, in Athens.

CONTENTS

OEDIPUS THE KING

DRAM ATIS PERSONAE

OED PUS K g *of Th b s*	F R T MESSE GER *a shepherd from*
PRIEST O ZEUS	*Cor h*
CREO *brother of Iocasta*	A S HERD *f rmerly in the service*
T I E I *the bl d prophet*	*of La us*
IOC STA	A SECOND M SSENGER, *from the house*

CHOR S OF THE N ELDERS

MUTE *A tr in of suppl a ts (old men youths d childre) The child en* ANTIGO *nd* ISMENE *d ughters of Oed pus and Ioc sta*

Before the Roy l P lace at Th bes The PRIE T OF ZEUS *stand fac g the centr l d o s These ar th o n open* EDIPL *enter*

Oe s My child en latest born to Cadmus who wa of old why re ye set bef re me thus w th w eathed branches f s pplants wh le th e ty reeks w h incense, rings th p ve f health and es of oe I deemed t unmeet m h ld en to hear the d gs t th m uth of othe s and h come h ther m self I Oed pus e owned of ll.

T ll me th th u ene ble ma — ce t is th nat l part t speak f r these—in what mood are e pticed here, w th what dread o what desire? Be sure that I ould gladly g e all a d hard f heart I d d I not pity such suppliant these

Priest of Zeu N y Oed pu rul r of my land thou seest f hat ea s w e who beset th alt rs —some estling st ll too t nd fo fa fl ht some bo ed th re p iest as I of Zeus—a d these the hose uth hile th est of th folk sit w th reathed b ches n th mark t pla es, and before the t hri es f Pallas, and here Ism us g ves an w r by fire

F th cit s thou th self seest s *now* too sore ly exed a d ca n m e l ft her head fr m be neath the rv a es f d th blight is on her th fru tful blossoms of th land in the herds am g th pa tu es, n th ba re pang of women and ithal th flam g god th malign pla ue hath ooped us, nd ges th town by hom the house f Cadmu is mad wa t but d rk H des rich in g oans nd tear

It ot a deeming th ranked w th god that I nd these bald n pplant t thy hearth b s d em thee first of men both n l f common hances, nd whe m t ls ha e to d with m e tha ma seet that th camest to th town of Cadm s, nd d d t q t u of the tax that we ren d red t th hard so gstress and this, thou h th u k ewest n th from that ould il thee no had t been schooled no b a god aid tis said and believed did t thou upl ft our life.

And now Oed pus, king glorious in all eyes we beseech thee all we suppl ants, to find for us some suc our wheth r by the wh per of a god thou kn west t or haply as in the power of m n for I se that when men ha e bee pro ed in deeds past the issues of their counsels, too most often ha e ffect

On best of mortals, aga n uplift our State! On guard thy fame si ce now thi land calls thee sav iour for thy forme zeal and never be it our mem ory of thy re gn that we v e e first restored and aft rw rd ca t down nay l ft up this State in such w se that t fall no m re!

W th good om n d d t thou give us that pa t hap p ness now also show thy lf the sam For if thou a t to rule th s la d e e as thou art now its l rd t s better to be l d of men than of a waste since n ithe walled town nor ship is any th ng f it is void a d n men dw ll with the the n

O d Oh my p teo s child en kno n well known t m r the des es wher with ye ha e come w ll wot I that ye suff all yet sufferers as ye a e there t not one of you whose suffe ng is s min Your pa n comes each one of you for h mself alo e and f r no other but my soul m urns at once f r the c ty and f r myself nd for thee.

So that ye r use me n t truly as one sunk in le p no be ur that I have w pt full ma y tears, g many wa n wanderings of th ught And the sole emedy h h w ll pond ng I could find this I ha put nto a t I ha e ent th son of Me oeceus, C eo mine own wife s b oth to the Pythian house f Phoeb s, to learn by what deed *o ord I m ght d l r this to* And al eady h th lapse f day r ckoned it troubles me what h d th f r he tarr es st gely beyo d the fitting pa e. But wh n he comes, th n shall I be *no t* mi f I d n t ll that the god hows.

Pr N y season h t thou spoken at th s mo *m r these* n t me that Creo draw nea

O d O k Apollo may he come to us in the b ghtnes of sa ng f rtune even as hi face is bright!

Pr Nay to all seeming he brings comfort else would he not be coming crowned thus thickly with berry laden bay

Oed We shall know soon he is at range to hear

Enter CREON

Prince my kinsman son of Menoeceus what news hast thou brought us from the god?

Creon Good news I tell thee that even troubles hard to bear—if haply they find the right issue—will end in perfect peace

Oed But what is the oracle? So far thy words make me neither bold nor yet afraid

Cr If thou wouldest hear while these are nigh I am ready to speak or else to go within

Oed Speak before all the sorrow which I bear is for these more than for mine own life

Cr With thy leave I will tell what I heard from the god Phoebus our lord bids us plainly to drive out a defiling thing which (he saith) hath been harboured in this land and not to harbour it so that it cannot be healed

Oed By what rite shall we cleanse us? What is the manner of the misfortune?

Cr By banishing a man or by bloodshed in quittance of bloodshed since it is that blood which brings the tempest on our city

Oed And who is the man whose fate he thus reveals?

Cr Laius king was lord of our land before thou wast pilot of this State

Oed I know it well—by hearsay for I saw him never

Cr He was slain and the god now bids us plainly to wreak vengeance on his murderers—whosoever they be

Oed And where are they upon the earth? Where shall the dim track of this old crime be found?

Cr In this land—said the god What is sought for can be caught only that which is not watched escapes

Oed And was it in the house or in the field or on strange soil that Laius met this bloody end?

Cr Twas on a visit to Delphi as he said that he had left our land and he came home no more after he had once set forth

Oed And was there none to tell? Was there no comrade of his journey who saw the deed from whom tidings might have been gained and used?

Cr All perished save one who fled in fear and could tell for certain but one thing of all that he saw

Oed And what was that? One thing might show the clue to many could we get but a small beginning for hope

Cr He said that robbers met and fell on them not in one man s might but with full many hands

Oed How then unless there was some trafficking in bribes from here should the robber have dared thus far?

Cr Such things were surmised but Laius once slain amid our troubles no avenger arose

Oed But when royalty had fallen thus what trouble in your path can have hindered a full search?

Cr The riddling Sphinx had made us let dark things go and was inviting us to think of what lay at our doors

Oed Nay I will start afresh and once more make dark things plain Right worthily hath Phoebus, and worthily hast thou bestowed this care on the cause of the dead and so as is meet ye shall find me too leagued with you in seeking vengeance for this land and for the god besides On behalf of no far off friend no but in mine own cause shall I dispel this taint For whoever was the slayer of Laius might wish to take vengeance on me also with a hand as fierce Therefore in doing right to Laius I serve myself

Come haste ye my children rise from the altar steps and lift these suppliant boughs and let some other summon hither the folk of Cadmus warned that I mean to leave nought untried for our health (with the god s help) shall be made certain—or our ruin

Pr My children let us rise we came at first to seek what this man promises of himself And may Phoebus who sent these oracles come to us therewith our saviour and deliverer from the pest

Exeunt OEDIPUS *and* PRIEST ENTER CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS

Chorus

O sweetly speaking message of Zeus in what spirit hast thou come from golden Pytho unto glorious Thebes? I am on the rack terror shakes my soul O thou Delian healer to whom wild cries rise in holy fear of thee what thing thou wilt work for me perchance unknown before perchance renewed with the revolving years tell me thou immortal Voice born of Golden Hope!

First call I on thee daughter of Zeus divine Athena and on thy sister guardian of our land Artemis who sits on her throne of fame above the circle of our Agora and on Phoebus the far-darter O shine forth on me my three fold help against death! If ever aforetime in arrest of ruin hurrying on the city ye drove a fiery pest beyond our borders come now also!

Woe is me countless are the sorrows that I bear a plague is on all our host and thought can find no weapon for defence The fruits of the glorious earth grow not by no birth of children do women surmount the pangs in which they shriek and life on life mayest thou see sped like bird on nimble wing aye swifter than resistless fire to the shore of the western god

By such deaths past numbering the city perishes unpitied her children lie on the ground spreading pestilence with none to mourn and meanwhile young wives and gray haired mothers with them uplift a wail at the steps of the altars some here some there entreating for their weary woes The

prayer to the Healer rings clear, and blent therewith, the voice of lamentation: for these things, golden daughter of Zeus, send us the bright face of comfort.

And grant that the fierce god of death, who now with no brazen shields, yet amid cries as of battle, wraps me in the flame of his onset, may turn his back in speedy flight from our land, borne by a fair wind to the great deep of Amphitritè, or to those waters in which none find haven, even to the Thracian wave; for if night leave aught undone, day follows to accomplish this. O thou who wieldest the *powers of the fire-fraught lightning*, O Zeus our father, slay him beneath thy thunderbolt!

Lycean King, fain were I that thy shafts also, from thy bent bow's string of woven gold, should go abroad in their might, *our champions* in the face of the foe; yea, and the flashing fires of Artemis wherewith she glances through the *Lycian* hills. And I call him whose locks are bound with gold, who is named with the name of this land, ruddy Bacchus to whom Bacchants cry, the comrade of the Maenads, to draw near with the blaze of his blithe torch, our ally against the god unhonoured among gods.

Enter OEDIPUS.

Oed. Thou prayest: and in answer to thy prayer,—if thou wilt give a loyal welcome to my words and minister to thine own disease,—thou mayest hope to find succour and relief from woes. These words will I speak publicly, as one who has been a stranger to this report, a stranger to the deed; *for I should not* be far on the track, if I were tracing it alone, without a clue. But as it is,—since it was only after the time of the deed that I was numbered a Theban among Thebans,—*to you*, the Cadmeans all, I do thus proclaim.

Whosoever of you knows by whom Laius son of Labdacus was slain, I bid him to declare all to me. And if he is afraid, I tell him to remove the danger of the charge from his path by denouncing himself; for he shall suffer nothing else unlovely, but only leave the land, unhurt. Or if any one knows an alien, from another land, as the assassin, let him not keep silence; for I will pay his guerdon, and my thanks shall rest with him besides.

But if ye keep silence—if any one, through fear, shall seek to screen friend or self from my behest—hear ye what I then shall do. I charge you that no one of this land, whereof I hold the *empire* and the throne, give shelter or speak word unto that murderer, *whosoever* he be,—make him partner of his prayer or sacrifice, or serve him with the lustral rite; but that all ban him their homes, knowing that *this* is our defiling thing, as the oracle of the Pythian god hath newly shown me. I then am on this wise the ally of the god and of the slain. And I pray solemnly that the slayer, whoso he be, whether his hidden guilt is lonely or hath partners, evilly, as he is evil, may wear out his unblest life. And for myself I pray that if, with my privity, he should become an inmate of my house, I may suffer the same things which even now I called down upon others. And on you I lay it to make all these words good, for my sake, and for the sake of the god, and for our land's, thus blasted with barrenness by angry heaven.

For even if the matter had not been urged on us by a god, it was not meet that ye should leave the guilt thus unpurged, when one so noble, and he your king, had perished; rather were ye bound to search it out. And now, since 'tis I who hold the powers which once he held, who possess his bed and the wife who bare seed to him; and since, had his *hope* of issue not been frustrate, children born of one mother would have *made ties* betwixt him and me—but, as it was, fate swooped upon his head; by reason of these things will I uphold this cause, even as the cause of mine own sire, and will leave nought untried in seeking to find him whose hand shed that blood, for the honour of the son of Labdacus and of Polydorus and elder Cadmus and Agenor who was of old.

And for those who obey me not, I pray that the gods send them neither harvest of the earth nor fruit of the womb, but that they be wasted by their lot that now is, or by one yet more dire. But for all you, the loyal folk of Cadmus to whom these *things* seem good, may Justice, *our ally*, and all the gods be with you graciously for ever.

Ch. As thou hast put me on my oath, on my oath, O king, I will speak. I am not the slayer, nor can I point to him who slew. As for the question, it was for Phoebus, who sent it, to tell us this thing—who can have wrought the deed.

Oed. Justly said; but no man on the earth can force the gods to what they will not.

Ch. I would fain say what seems to me next best after this.

Oed. If there is yet a third course, spare not to show it.

Ch. I know that our lord Teiresias is the seer most like to our lord Phoebus; from whom, O king, a searcher of these things might learn them *most* clearly.

Oed. Not even this have I left out of *my* cares. On the hint of Creon, I have twice sent a man to bring him; and this long while *I marvel* why he is not here.

Ch. Indeed (his skill apart) the rumours are but faint and old.

Oed. What rumours are they? I look to every story.

Ch. Certain wayfarers were said to have killed him.

Oed. I, too, have heard it, but none sees him who saw it.

Ch. Nay, if he knows what fear is, he will not stay when he hears thy curses, so dire as they are.

Oed. When a *man* shrinks not from a deed, neither is he scared by a word.

Ch. But there is one to convict him. For here they bring at last the godlike prophet, in whom alone of men doth live the truth.

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Cr He was slain and the god now bids us plainly to wreak vengeance on his murderers—whosoever they be

Oed And where are they upon the earth? Where shall the dim track of this old crime be found?

Cr In this land—said the god What is sought for can be caught only that which is not watched escapes

Oed And was it in the house or in the field or on strange soil that Laius met this bloody end?

Cr Twas on a visit to Delphi as he said that he had left our land and he came home no more after he had once set forth

Oed And was there none to tell? Was there no comrade of his journey who saw the deed from whom tidings might have been gained and used?

Cr All perished save one who fled in fear and could tell for certain but one thing of all that he saw

Oed And what was that? One thing might show the clue to many could we get but a small beginning for hope

Cr He said that robbers met and fell on them not in one man s might but with full many hands

Oed How then unless there was some trafficking in bribes from here should the robber have dared thus far?

Cr Such things were surmised but Laius once slain amid our troubles no avenger arose

Oed But when royalty had fallen thus what trouble in your path can have hindered a full search?

Cr The riddling Sphinx had made us let dark things go and was inviting us to think of what lay at our doors

Oed Nay I will start afresh and once more make dark things plain Right worthily hath Phoebus, and worthily hast thou bestowed this care on the cause of the dead and so as is meet ye shall find me too leagued with you *in seeking vengeance for* this land and for the god besides On behalf of no far off friend no but in mine own cause shall I dispel this taint For whoever was the slayer of Laius might wish to take vengeance on me also with a hand as fierce Therefore in doing right to Laius I serve myself

Come haste ye my children rise from the altar steps and lift these suppliant boughs and l t some other summon hither the folk of Cadmus warned that I mean to leave nought untried for our health (with the god s help) shall be made certain—or our *ruin*

Pr My children let us rise we came at first to seek what this man promises of himself And may Phoebus who sent these oracles come to us there with our saviour and deliverer from the pest

Exeunt OEDIPUS *and* PRIEST ENTER CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS

Chorus

O sweetly speaking message of Zeus in what spirit hast thou come from golden Pytho unto glorious Thebes? I am on the rack terror shakes my soul O thou Delian healer to whom wild cries rise in holy fear of thee what thing thou wilt work for me perchance unknown before perchance renewed with the revolving years tell me thou immortal Voice born of Golden Hope!

First call I on thee daughter of Zeus divine Athena and on thy sister guardian of our land Artemis who sits on her throne of fame above the circle of our Agora and on Phoebus the far-darter O shine forth on me my three fold help against death! If ever aforetime in arrest of ruin hurrying on the city ye drove a fiery pest beyond our borders come now also!

Woe is me countless are the sorrows that I bear a plague is on all our host and thought can find no weapon for defence The fruits of the glorious earth grow not by no birth of children do women surmount the pangs in which they shriek and life on life mayest thou see sped like bird on nimble wing aye swifter than resistless fire to the shore of the western god

By such deaths past numbering the city perishes unpitied her children lie on the ground spreading pestilence with none to mourn and meanwhile young wives and gray haired mothers with them uplift a wail at the steps of the altars some here some there entreating for their weary woes. The

thou and the plotter of these things w ll rue your zeal to purg the land Na d d t thou n t seem to be a old man th u shouldst have learned t thy cost how bold thou art

Ch To our thinkin both this man s words and thine Oed pus, ha e been sa d in anger Not f r such words is our need but to s ek how we shall best discharge the m dates of the god

Te King tha h thou art the r ght f reply at lea t must be de med the same for both f that I too am lo d Not t th e do I h e ser ant but to Loxias a d so I hall not stand enrolled under Creon for my patron And I tell thee—sinc th u ha t taunted m e en with bl nd ess—that th u hast sight yet seest ot in what misery th u rt nor h re thou dw llest n r w th whom Dost thou k ow f what stock th u art? And thou h t been an u w tting foe t thi e own kin n the shades a d on the earth abo and the double lash of thy m he s and thy father curse sh ll ne day dri thee fr m this la d i d eadful haste, w th da kness then on the eyes that now see tr e

A d hat plac hall n t b harbo r to thy shr k hat of all Citha hall t ring w th t soon hen thou hast learnt the mea ing f th nupt als in whi h within that hous th u d dst f nd a fatal ha en fte a e so fa r? A d a th on f th r ills thou guessest n t wh h shall mak thee le el ith thy tru lf nd w th thin own brood

The f e heap thy sc rns on Creon d on my messa for no o e m n me shall e er be cru hed m re miser bly than th u

O d Are these tau t t be indeed bor e from *h m?*—H nce f tak th e! H n e th s n tant! B k!—a ay!—a unt th e from these doors!

T I had ev r com not I had t th u n t called m

O d I knew not that th wast bout t speak f lly r t had b en l g r I had sent for thee to my h u

Te Such m I—as th u th nkest, a fool but f r th pa ents wh beg t thee sa

Oed What par nt ? Stay nd wh f m n is my sir ?

Te Th d y ha l show thy b rth nd shall bri g thy ruin

O d What dd es, what dark w ds th u lways speakest!

T N y t not th o most skilled t unra el dark spee h?

Oed Make that my reproach in wh h tho halt fi d m g eat

T Y t twa y t that f rtu that u d d the

Oed Nay if I d li ered th t wn I ca e n t

T Then I will g so d thou boy take m h e

O d Aye, l t him take th while he thou t h ndra ce thou a t oubl wh n thou hast ished th u wilt t m m re.

T I w ll g whe I ha d n m e rrand fea less f thy f own f thou can t e destroy m A d I t ll th —th man f wh m thou ha t this

lon wh le been in quest uttering threats, and proclaiming a search into the murder of La u—that m n is here in seeming a al en sojourner but anon he sh ll be found a native Theban and shall not be glad of his f tune A blind man he wh o now hath s ght a beggar who no as r ch he shall make his way t a stran e l d feel g the ground bef re him with his staff And he shall be found at once brother and fath r of the ch ldren with whom he consorts son an l hu band of the w man who bore him heir to his f ther s bed shed ler of his father s blood

So go thou in a d thi k on that and if thou find that I ha e been at fault say thenceforth that I ha e n wit in pr phecy

T r est is led o t by the Boy O *dip s enters the palace*

Chorus

Wh o s h of whom the d ine voice from the D lphi n rock hath spoken as ha n wrought w th red h n ls h r rs that no tong e can tell?

It t m that he ply n fl ght a foot stro ger than th feet of st rm sw ft steeds for th son of Zeus is springin on h m all armed w th fiery l ght ings and with him me the dread unerring Fates

Yea newly g en from sn wy Parnassus, the mes sa e hath fla ed forth to make all sea ch for the unk own man Into the wild wood s co ert among ca es and rocks he is roam ng fierce as a bull wretched and f rlorn on h j yless path st ll s ek g to put from h m the doom spoken at Earth s c t al hrine but that doom er li es, e er flits a und him

D eadly n sooth d eadly doth the w se au ur m e me wh appr n t or m ble t deny H to peak, I k ow n t I am fluttered with fore bod gs either n the present ha e I clear n n r f th futu e. Ne e in past d ys, nor n these ha e I hea d h w the house of Labdacus or the son of Pol b had th r a ga n t ther any g ef that I co ld brin as proof n assa l the public fame of Oed pu nd se k g to a n e the li e of Labd cus fo the u d e red mu der

Nay Z us ndeed a d Apollo are keen f thought and kno v th th s of earth but that m rt l se r w n k o ledg abo e m n f th the e can be no u test though ma may surpas man lore Yet ntil I see th word mad good n er w ll I asse t wh n m n bl m Oed pu Bef e ll e s the w n ed ma d n came aga t h m f old and h was se n to be wise he bo the test n welcome ser c to u St t e r th refo by the e d ct of my heart hall he be djudged guilty of cr m

E ter C eon

Cr F llow c tiz n has g learned th t Oedipus the k lays di e charg s a ainst me I am her in d na t If th e pese t tro ble h thinks that he ha suff red fr m *me* by wo d or deed aught that te ds to harm in truth I c a n t my full term of years when I must bear su h blame a th s Th w ong of th s rum ur tou hes me not in one

Oed Teiresias whose soul grasps all things the lore that may be told and the unspeakable the secrets of heaven and the low things of earth thou feelest though thou canst not see what a plague doth haunt our State from which great prophet we find in thee our protector and only saviour Now Phoebus —*if indeed thou knowest it not from the messengers*—sent answer to our question that the only riddance from this pest which could come was if we should learn aright the slayers of Laius and slay them or send them into exile from our land Do thou then grudge neither voice of birds nor any other way of seer lore that thou hast but rescue thyself and the State rescue me rescue all that is defiled by the dead *For we are in thy hand and man s* noblest task is to help others by his best means and powers

Teiresias Alas how dreadful to have wisdom where it profits not the wise! Aye I knew this well but let it slip out of mind else would I never have come here

Oed What now? How sad thou hast come in!

Te Let me go home most easily wilt thou bear thine own burden to the end and I mine if thou wilt consent

Oed Thy words are strange nor kindly to this State which nurtured thee when thou withholdest this response

Te Nay I see that thou on thy part openest not thy lips in season therefore I speak not that neither may I have thy mishap

Oed For the love of the gods turn not away if thou hast knowledge all we suppliants implore thee on our knees

Te Aye for ye are all without knowledge but never will I reveal my griefs—that I say not thine

Oed How sayest thou? Thou knowest the secret and wilt not tell it but art minded to betray us and to destroy the State?

Te I will pain neither myself nor thee Why vainly ask these things? Thou wilt not learn them from me

Oed What basest of the base—for thou wouldest anger a very stone—wilt thou never speak out? Can nothing touch thee? Wilt thou never make an end?

Te Thou blamest my temper but seest not that to which thou thyself art wedded no thou findest fault with me

Oed And who would not be angry to hear the words with which thou now dost slight this city?

Te The future will come of itself though I shroud it in silence

Oed Then seeing that it must come thou on thy part shouldst tell me thereof

Te I will speak no further rage then if thou wilt with the fiercest wrath thy heart doth know

Oed Aye verily I will not spare—so wroth I am—to speak *all my thought Know that thou seemest* to me e en to have h lped in plottin the deed and to have done it short of slaying with thy hands Hadst thou eyesight I would have said that the doing also of this thing was thine alone

Te In sooth? I charge thee that thou abide by the decree of thine own mouth and from this day speak neither to these nor to me *thou* art the accursed defiler of this land

Oed So brazen with thy blustering taunt? And wherein dost thou trust to escape thy due?

Te I have escaped in my truth is my strength

Oed Who taught thee this? It was not at least thine art

Te Thou for thou didst spur me into speech against my will

Oed What speech? Speak again that I may learn it better

Te Didst thou not take my sense before? Or art thou tempting me in talk?

Oed No *I took it not so that I can call it known* —speak again

Te I say that thou art the slayer of the man whose slayer thou seekest

Oed Now thou shalt rue that thou hast twice said words so dire

Te Wouldst thou have me say more that thou mayest be more wroth?

Oed What thou wilt it will be said in vain

Te I say that thou hast been living in unhallowed shame with thy nearest kin and seest not to what woe thou hast come

Oed Dost thou indeed think that thou shalt always speak thus without smarting?

Te Yes if there is any strength in truth

Oed Nay there is for all save thee for thee that strength is not since thou art maimed in ear and in wit and in eye

Te Aye and thou art a poor wretch to utter taunts which every man here will soon hurl at thee

Oed Night endless night hath thee in her keeping so that thou canst never hurt me or any man who sees the sun

Te No thy doom is not to fall by *me* Apollo is enough whose care it is to work that out

Oed *Are these Creon s devices or thine?*

Te Nay Creon is no plague to thee thou art thine own

Oed O wealth and empire and skill surpassing skill in life s keen rivalries how great is the envy that cleaves to you if for the sake yea of this power which the city hath put into my hands a gift unsought Creon the trusty Creon mine old friend hath crept on me by stealth yearning to thrust me out of it and hath suborned such a scheming juggler as this a tricky quack who hath eyes only for his gain but in his art is blind!

Come now tell me where hast thou proved thyself a seer? Why when the Watcher was here who wove dark song didst thou say nothing that could free this folk? Yet the riddle at least was not for the first comer to read there was need of a seer s *skill and none such thou wast found to have either* by help of birds or as known from any god no I came I Oedipus the ignorant and made her mute when I had seized the answer by my wit untaught of birds And it is I whom thou art trying to oust thinking to stand close to Creon s throne Methinks

Oed. Not so: I desire thy death—not thy banishment—that thou mayest show forth what manner of thing is envy.

Cr. Thou speakest as resolved not to yield or to believe?

[*Oed.* No; for thou persuadest me not that thou art worthy of belief.]

Cr. No, for I find thee not sane.

Oed. Sane, at least, in mine own interest.

Cr. Nay, thou shouldst be so in mine also.

Oed. Nay, thou art false.

Cr. But if thou understandest nought?

Oed. Yet must I rule.

Cr. Not if thou rule ill.

Oed. Hear him, O Thebes!

Cr. Thebes is for me also—not for thee alone.

Enter IOCASTA.

Ch. Cease, princes; and in good time for you I see Iocasta coming yonder from the house, with whose help ye should compose your present feud.

IOCASTA. Misguided men, why have ye raised such foolish strife of tongues? Are ye not ashamed, while the land is thus sick, to stir up troubles of your own? Come, go thou into the house—and thou, Creon, to thy home—and forbear to make much of a petty grief.

Cr. Kinswoman, Oedipus thy lord claims to do dread things unto me, even one or other of two ills—to thrust me from the land of my fathers, or to slay me amain.

Oed. Yea; for I have caught him, lady, working evil, by ill arts, against my person.

Cr. Now may I see no good, but perish accursed, if I have done aught to thee of that wherewith thou chargest me!

Io. O, for the gods' love, believe it, Oedipus—first, for the awful sake of this oath unto the gods, then for my sake and for theirs who stand before thee!

(*The following lines between the* CHORUS *and* OEDIPUS *and between the* CHORUS, IOCASTA, *and* OEDIPUS *are* [illegible] *responsive.*)

Ch. Consent, reflect, hearken, O my king, I pray thee!

Oed. What grace, then, wouldest thou have me grant thee?

Ch. Respect him who aforetime was not foolish, and who now is strong in his oath.

Oed. Now dost thou know what thou cravest?

Ch. Yea.

Oed. Declare, then, what thou meanest.

Ch. That thou shouldest never use an unproved rumour to cast a dishonouring charge on the friend who has bound himself with a curse.

Oed. Then be very sure that, when thou seekest this, for me thou art seeking destruction, or exile from this land.

Ch. No, by him who stands in the front of all the heavenly host, no, by the Sun! Unblest, unfriended, may I die by the uttermost doom, if I have that thought! But my unhappy soul is worn by the withering of the land, and again by the thought that our old sorrows should be crowned by sorrows springing from you twain.

Oed. Then let him go, though I am surely doomed to death, or to be thrust dishonoured from the land. Thy lips, not his, move my compassion by their plaint; but he, where'er he be, shall be hated.

Cr. Sullen in yielding art thou seen, even as vehement in the excesses of thy wrath; but such natures are justly sorest for themselves to bear.

Oed. Then wilt thou not leave me in peace, and get thee gone?

Cr. I will go my way; I have found thee undiscerning, but in the sight of these I am just. [*Exit.*]

Ch. Lady, why dost thou delay to take yon man into the house?

Io. I will do so, when I have learned what hath chanced.

Ch. Blind suspicion, bred of talk, arose; and, on the other part, injustice wounds.

Io. It was on both sides?

Ch. Aye.

Io. And what was the story?

Ch. Enough, methinks, enough—when our land is already vexed—that the matter should rest where it ceased.

Oed. Seest thou to what thou hast come, for all thy honest purpose, in seeking to slack and blunt my zeal?

Ch. King, I have said it not once alone—be sure that I should have been shown a madman, bankrupt in sane counsel, if I put thee away—thee, who gavest a true course to my beloved country when distraught by troubles—thee, who now also art like to prove our prospering guide.

Io. In the name of the gods, tell me also, O king, on what account thou hast conceived this steadfast wrath.

Oed. That will I; for I honour thee, lady, above yonder men: the cause is Creon, and the plots that he hath laid against me.

Io. Speak on—if thou canst tell clearly how the feud began.

Oed. He says that I stand guilty of the blood of Laius.

Io. As on his own knowledge? Or on hearsay from another?

Oed. Nay, he hath made a rascal seer his mouthpiece; as for himself, he keeps his lips wholly pure.

Io. Then absolve thyself of the things whereof thou speakest; hearken to me, and learn for thy comfort that nought of mortal birth is a sharer in the science of the seer. I will give thee pithy proof of that.

An oracle came to Laius once—I will not say from Phoebus himself, but from his ministers—that the doom should overtake him to die by the hand of his child, who should spring from him and me.

Now Laius—as, at least, the rumour saith—was murdered one day by foreign robbers at a place where three highways meet. And the child's birth was not three days past, when Laius pinned its ankles together, and had it thrown, by others' hands, on a trackless mountain.

point alone but has the largest scope if I am to be called a traitor in the city a traitor too by thee and by my friends

Ch Nay but this taunt came under stress per chance of anger rather than from the purpose of the heart

Cr And the saying was uttered that *my* counsels won the seer to utter his falsehoods?

Ch Such things were said—I know not with what meaning

Cr And was this charge laid against me with steady eyes and steady mind?

Ch I know not I see not what my masters do but here comes our lord forth from the house

Enter OEDIPUS

Oed Sirrah how camest thou here? Hast thou a front so bold that thou hast come to my house who art the proved assassin of its master the palpable robber of my crown? Come tell me in the name of the gods was it cowardice or folly that thou sawest in me that thou didst plot to do this thing? Didst thou think that I would not note this deed of thine creeping on me by stealth or aware would not ward it off? Now is not thine attempt foolish to seek without followers or friends a throne a prize which followers and wealth must win?

Cr Mark me now—in answer to thy words hear a fair reply and then judge for thyself on knowledge

Oed Thou art apt in speech but I have a poor wit for thy lessons since I have found thee my malig nant foe

Cr Now first hear how I will explain this very thing—

Oed Explain me not one thing—that thou art not false

Cr If thou deemest that stubbornness without sense is a good gift thou art not wise

Oed If thou deemest that thou canst wrong a kins man and escape the penalty thou art not sane

Cr Justly said I grant thee but tell me what is the wrong that thou sayest thou hast suffered from me

Oed Didst thou advise or didst thou not that I should send for that reverend seer?

Cr And now I am still of the same mind

Oed How long is it then since Laius—

Cr Since Laius ? I take not thy drift

Oed —was swept from men s sight by a deadly vi olence?

Cr The count of years would run far into the past

Oed Was this seer then of the craft in those days?

Cr Yea skilled as now and in equal honour

Oed Made he then any mention of me at that time?

Cr Never certainly when I was within hearing

Oed But held ye not a search touching the murder?

Cr Due search we held of course—and learned nothing

Oed And how was it that this sage did not tell his story *then*?

Cr I know not where I lack light tis my wont to be silent

Oed Thus much at least thou knowest and couldst declare with light enough

Cr What is that? If I know it I will not deny

Oed That if he had not conferred with thee he would never have named *my* slaying of Laius

Cr If so he speaks thou best knowest but I claim to learn from thee as much as thou hast now from me

Oed Learn thy fill I shall never be found guilty of the blood

Cr Say then—thou hast married my sister?

Oed The question allows not of denial

Cr And thou rulest the land as she doth with like sway?

Oed She obtains from me all her desire

Cr And rank not I as a third peer of you twain?

Oed Aye tis just therein that thou art seen a false friend

Cr Not so if thou wouldst reason with thine own heart as I with mine And first weigh this—whether thou thinkest that any one would choose to rule amid terrors rather than in unruffled peace grant ing that he is to have the same powers Now I for one have no yearning in my nature to be a king rather than to do kingly deeds no nor hath any man who knows how to keep a sober mind For now I win all boons from thee without fear but were I ruler myself I should be doing much even against mine own pleasure

How then could royalty be sweeter for me to have than painless rule and influence? Not yet am I so misguided as to desire other honours than those which profit Now all wish me joy now every man has a greeting for me now those who have a suit to thee crave speech with me since therein is all their hope of success Then why should I resign these things and take those? No mind will become false while it is wise Nay I am no lover of such policy and if another put it into deed never could I bear to act with him

And in proof of this first go to Pytho and ask if I brought thee true word of the oracle then next if thou find that I have planned aught in concert with the soothsayer take and slay me by the sen tence not of one mouth but of twain—by mine own no less than thine But make me not guilty in a corner on unproved surmise It is not right to ad judge bad men good at random or good men bad I count it a like thing for a man to cast off a true friend as to cast away the life in his own bosom which most he loves Nay thou wilt learn these things with sureness in time for time alone shows a just man but thou couldst discern a knave even in one day

Ch Well hath he spoken O king for one who giveth heed not to fall the quick in counsel are not sure

Oed When the stealthy plotter is moving on me in quick sort I too must be quick with my counter plot If I await him in repose his ends will have been gained and mine missed

Cr What wouldst thou then? Cast me out of the land?

So in that case Apollo brought it not to pass that the babe should become the slayer of his sire or that *Laius should die—the dread thing which he feared—*by his child s hand Thus did the messages of seer craft map out the future Regard them thou not at all Whatsoever needful things the god seeks he *himself will easily bring to light*

Oed What restlessness of soul lady what tumult of the mind hath just come upon me since I heard thee speak!

Io What anxiety hath startled thee that thou sayest this?

Oed Methought I heard this from thee—that Laius was slain where three highways meet

Io Yea that was the story *nor hath it ceased yet*

Oed And where is the place where this befell?

Io The land is called Phocis and branching roads lead to the same spot from Delphi and from Daulia

Oed And what is the time that hath passed since these things were?

Io The news was published to the town shortly before thou wast first seen in power over this land

Oed O Zeus what hast thou decreed to do unto me?

Io And wherefore Oedipus doth this thing weigh upon thy soul?

Oed Ask me not yet but say what was the stature of Laius and how ripe his manhood

Io He was tall the silver just lightly strewn among his hair and his form was not greatly unlike to thine

Oed Unhappy that I am! Methinks I have been laying myself even now under a dread curse and knew it not

Io How sayest thou? I tremble when I look on thee my king

Oed Dread misgivings have I that the seer can see. But thou wilt show better if thou wilt tell me one thing more

Io Indeed—though I tremble—I will answer all thou askest when I hear it

Oed Went he in small force or with many armed followers like a chieftain?

Io Five they were in all—a herald one of them and there was one carriage which bore Laius

Oed Alas! Tis now clear indeed —Who was he who gave you these tidings lady?

Io A servant—the sole survi or who came home

Oed Is he haply at hand in the house now?

Io No truly so soon as he came thence and found thee reigning in the stead of Laius he supplicated me with hand laid on mine that I would send him to the fields to the pastures of the flocks that he might be far from the sight of this town And I sent him he was worthy for a slave to win e en a larger boon than that

Oed Would then *that he could return to us with* out delay!

Io It is easy but wherefore dost thou enjoin this?

Oed I fear lady that mine own lips ha e been unguarded and therefore am I fain to behold him

Io Nay he shall come But I too methinks have a claim to learn what lies heavy on thy heart my king

Oed Yea and it shall not be kept from thee now that my forebodings have advanced so far Who indeed is more to me than thou to whom I should speak in passing through such a fortune as this?

My father was Polybus of Corinth my mother the Dorian Merope and I was held the first of all the folk in that town until a chance bef ll me worthy indeed of wonder though not worthy of *mine own heat concerning it* At a banquet a man full of wine cast it at me in his cups that I was not the true son of my sire And I vexed restrained myself for that day as best I might but on the next I *went to my mother and father and questioned* them and they were wroth for the taunt with him who had let that word fly So on their part I had comfort yet was this thing ever rankling in my heart for it still crept abroad with strong rumour And unknown to mother or father I went to Delphi and Phoebus sent me forth disappointed of that knowledge for which I came but in his response set forth other things full of sorrow and terror and woe even that I was fated to defile my mother s bed and that I should show unto men a brood which they could not endure to behold and that I should be the slayer of the sire who begat me

And I when I had listened to this turned to fl ht from the land of Corinth thenceforth wotting of its region by the stars alone to some spot where I should never see fulfilment of the infamies foretold in mine evil doom And on my way I cam to the regions in which thou sayest that this *prince* perished Now lady I will tell thee the truth When in my journey I was near to those three roads there met me a *herald* and a man seated in a carria e drawn by colts as thou hast described and he who was in front and the old man himself were for thrusting me rudely from the path Then in anger *I struck him who pushed me aside—the driver* and the old man seeing it watched the moment when I was pa sing and from the carriage brou ht his goad with two teeth down full upon my head Yet was *he paid with interest by one swift blow from the* staff in this hand he was rolled right out of the carriage on his back and I slew e ery man of them

But if this stranger had any tie of kinship with *Laius* who is now more wretched than the man before thee? What mortal ould prove more hated of heaven? Whom no stranger no citizen is allo ved to receive in his house whom it is unlawful that any one accost whom all must repel from their hom s! And this—this curse—was laid on me by no mouth but mine own! And I pollute the bed of the sla n man with the hands by whi h he perished Say am I vile? Oh am I not utterly unclean?—seeing that *I must be banished and in banishment see not mine* own people nor set foot in mine own land or else be joined in wedlock to my mother an l slay my sire even Polybus who begat and reared me

Then would not he speak aright of Oedipus who judged these things sent by some cruel power above

Me. Another shepherd gave thee up to me.

Oed. Who was he? Art thou in case to tell clearly?

Me. I think he was called one of the household of Laius.

Oed. The king who ruled this country long ago?

Me. The same: 'twas in his service that the man was a herd.

Oed. Is he still alive, that I might see him?

Me. Nay, ye folk of the country should know best.

Oed. Is there any of you here present that knows the herd of whom he speaks—that hath seen him in the pastures or the town? Answer! The hour hath come that these things should be finally revealed.

Ch. Methinks he speaks of no other than the peasant whom thou wast already fain to see; but our lady Iocasta might best tell that.

Oed. Lady, wottest thou of him whom we lately summoned? Is it of him that this man speaks?

Jo. Why ask of whom he spoke? Regard it not... waste not a thought on what he said... 'twere idle.

Oed. It must not be that, with such clues in my grasp, I should fail to bring my birth to light.

Jo. For the gods' sake, if thou hast any care for thine own life, forbear this search! My anguish is enough.

Oed. Be of good courage; though I be found the son of servile mother,—aye, a slave by three descents,—*thou* wilt not be proved base-born.

Jo. Yet hear me, I implore thee: do not thus.

Oed. I must not hear of not discovering the whole truth.

Jo. Yet I wish thee well—I counsel thee for the best.

Oed. These best counsels, then, vex my patience.

Jo. Ill-fated one! Mayst thou never come to know who thou art!

Oed. Go, some one, fetch me the herdsman hither,—and leave yon woman to glory in her princely stock.

Jo. Alas, alas, miserable!—that word alone can I say unto thee, and no other word henceforth for ever.

She rushes into the palace.

Ch. Why hath the lady gone, Oedipus, in a transport of wild grief? I misdoubt, a storm of sorrow will break forth from this silence.

Oed. Break forth what will! Be my race never so lowly, I must crave to learn it. Yon woman, perchance—for she is proud with more than a woman's pride—thinks shame of my base source. But I, who hold myself son of Fortune that gives good, will not be dishonoured. She is the mother from whom I spring; and the months, my kinsmen, have marked me sometimes lowly, sometimes great. Such being my lineage, never more can I prove false to it, or spare to search out the secret of my birth.

Ch. If I am a seer or wise of heart, O Cithaeron, thou shalt not fail—by yon heaven, thou shalt not!—to know at tomorrow's full moon that Oedipus honours thee as native to him, as his nurse, and his mother, and that thou art celebrated in our dance and song, because thou art well-pleasing to our prince. O Phoebus to whom we cry, may these things find favour in thy sight!

Who was it, my son, who of the race whose years are many that bore thee in wedlock with Pan, the mountain-roaming father? Or was it a bride of Loxias that bore thee? For dear to him are all the upland pastures. Or perchance 'twas Cyllene's lord, or the Bacchants' god, dweller on the hill-tops, that received thee, a new-born joy, from one of the Nymphs of Helicon, with whom he most doth sport.

Oed. Elders, if 'tis for me to guess, who have never met with him, I think I see the herdsman of whom we have long been in quest; for in his venerable age he tallies with yon stranger's years, and withal I know those who bring him, methinks, as servants of mine own. But perchance thou mayest have the advantage of me in knowledge, if thou hast seen the herdsman before.

Ch. Aye, I know him, be sure; he was in the service of Laius—trusty as any man, in his shepherd's place.

The herdsman is brought in.

Oed. I ask thee first, Corinthian stranger, is this he whom thou meanest?

Me. This man whom thou beholdest.

Oed. Ho thou, old man—I would have thee look this way, and answer all that I ask thee. Thou wast once in the service of Laius?

Herdsman. I was—a slave not bought, but reared in his house.

Oed. Employed in what labour, or what way of life?

He. For the best part of my life I tended flocks.

Oed. And what the regions that thou didst chiefly haunt?

He. Sometimes it was Cithaeron, sometimes the neighbouring ground.

Oed. Then wottest thou of having noted yon man in these parts—

He. Doing what?... What man dost thou mean?...

Oed. This man here—or of having ever met him before?

He. Not so that I could speak at once from memory.

Me. And no wonder, master. But I will bring clear recollection to his ignorance. I am sure that he well wots of the time when we abode in the region of Cithaeron,—he with two flocks, I, his comrade, with one,—three full half-years, from spring to Arcturus; and then for the winter I used to drive my flock to mine own fold, and he took his to the fold of Laius. Did aught of this happen as I tell, or did it not?

He. Thou speakest the truth—though 'tis long ago.

Me. Come, tell me now—wottest thou of having given me a boy in those days, to be reared as mine own foster-son?

He. What now? Why dost thou ask the question?

Me. Yonder man, my friend, is he who then was young.

He. Plague seize thee—be silent once for all!

Oed Iocasta dearest wife why hast thou summoned me forth from these doors?

Io Hear this man and judge as thou listenest to what the awful oracles of the gods have come

Oed And he—who may he be and what news hath he for me?

Io He is from Corinth to tell that thy father Polybus lives no longer but hath perished

Oed How stranger? Let me have it from thine own mouth

Me If I must first make these tidings plain know indeed that he is dead and gone

Oed By treachery or by visit of disease?

Me A light thing in the scale brings the aged to their rest

Oed Ah he died it seems of sickness?

Me Yea and of the long years that he had told

Oed Alas alas! Why indeed my wife should one look to the hearth of the Pythian seer or to the birds that scream above our heads on whose showing I was doomed to slay my sire? But he is dead and hid already beneath the earth and here am I who have not put hand to spear Unless perchance he was killed by longing for me thus indeed I should be the cause of his death But the oracles as they stand at least Polybus hath swept with him to his rest in Hades they are worth nought

Io Nay did I not so foretell to thee long since?

Oed Thou didst but I was misled by my fear

Io Now no more lay aught of those thing to heart

Oed But surely I must needs fear my mother s bed?

Io Nay what should mortal fear for whom the decrees of fortune are supreme and who hath clear foresight of nothing? Tis best to live at random as one may But fear not thou touching wedlock with thy mother Many men ere now have o fared in dreams also but he to whom these things are as nought bears his life most easily

Oed All these bold words of thine would have been well were not my mother living but as it is since she lives I must needs fear—though thou sayest well

Io Howbeit thy father s death is a great sign to cheer us

Oed Great I know but my fear is of her who lives

Me And who is the woman about whom ye fear?

Oed Merope old man the consort of Polybus

Me And what is it in her that moves your fear?

Oed A heaven sent oracle of dread import stranger

Me Lawful or unlawful for another to know?

Oed Lawful surely Loxias once said that I was doomed to espouse mine own mother and to shed with mine own hands my father s blood Wherefore my home in Corinth was long kept by me afar with happy event indeed—yet still tis sweet to see the face of parents

Me Was it indeed for fear of this that thou wast an exile from the city?

Oed And because I wished not old man to be the slayer of my sire

Me Then why have I not freed thee king from this fear seeing that I came with friendly purpose?

Oed Indeed thou shouldst have guerdon due from me

Me Indeed twas chiefly for this that I came—that on thy return home I might reap some good

Oed Nay I will never go near my parents

Me Ah my son tis plain enough that thou knowest not what thou doest

Oed How old man? For the gods love tell me

Me If for these reasons thou shrinkest from going home

Oed Aye I dread lest Phoebus prove himself true for me

Me Thou dreadest to be stained with guilt through thy parents?

Oed Even so old man—this it is that ever affrights me

Me Dost thou know then that thy fears are wholly vain?

Oed How so if I was born of those parents?

Me Because Polybus was nothing to thee in blood

Oed What sayest thou? Was Polybus not my sire?

Me No more than he who speaks to thee but just so much

Oed And how can my sire be level with him who is as nought to me?

Me Nay he begat thee not any more than I

Oed Nay wherefore then called he me his son?

Me Know that he had received thee as a gift from my hands of yore

Oed And yet he loved me so dearly who came from another s hand?

Me Yea his former childlessness won him thereto

Oed And thou—hadst thou bought me or found me by chance when thou gavest me to him?

Me Found thee in Cithaeron s winding glens

Oed And wherefore wast thou roaming in those regions?

Me I was there in charge of mountain flocks

Oed What thou wast a shepherd—a vagrant hireling?

Me But thy preserver my son in that hour

Oed And what pain was mine when thou didst take me in thine arms?

Me The ankles of thy feet might witness

Oed Ah me why dost thou speak of th t old trouble?

Me I freed thee when thou hadst thine ankles pinned together

Oed Aye twas a dread brand of shame that I took from my cradle

Me Such that from that fortune thou wast called by the name which still is thine

Oed Oh for the gods love—was the deed my mother s or father s? Speak!

Me I know not he who gave thee to me wots better of that than I

Oed What thou hadst me from another? Thou didst not light on me thyself?

a sword, askin where he should find the wife who was n wif b t a m ther whose womb had borne alike himself a d his ch ldr n A d in his frenzy a power abo e man was his guide f r twas no e of us mortals who ere nigh And with a dread shriek, as thou h someone beckoned him on he sp an at the double doors, and from th ir sockets forced the bendin bolts, nd rushed into the room

There beh ld we the woman hanging by the neck i a twisted n ose of s ingin cords. But he when he saw her w th a dread deep cry of misery loosed the halter whe by she hun And when the hapless ma was stretched upon th ground then was the sequ l dread to see To he to e fr m her rai ment the golden brooches whe ew th she was decked and lifted them and sm te full on his own y balls, uttern rd like thes No m re h ll ye behold such horrors as I was suffe ng and worki g! l ng enou h ha e ye looked on those whom ye o ght never t ha e seen failed n kn wled e of those whom I yearned to know—henc forth ye hall be da k!

T such dire refra n, not once al ne but oft struck he his yes ith lifted hand and at each blow th ensanguined e e balls bed wed his be rd nor sent forth slu ish d ps f gore but all t once a dark shower of blood m down like hail

From th d ed of t at such ils h e br ken forth, n t on o e al ne but with man led woe for ma and wif Th ld happiness f thei a estral fortu e was afo eum happ ness ndeed but to-day —lam tat on ru n death ham all earthly ils that can be named—all, all re the rs.

Ch And hath th suff rer now a y respit from pain?

2 *M* He cries for som n to unbar the gates and show to all th Cadmeans h fath r layer his mother s—th unh ly wo d m st n t po s my lips—as purposing t ca t h mself *out of th land* nd b d no more t make th ho se cu sed nder his own urse H wbe t he la k tren th nd one to guid his step f th ang h is mo tha man may bea And he w ll show th to thee also for lo, the bars f th *gates* are w thdraw d soo thou halt beh ld sight which e en he who bhors t must pity

Enter OED US

Ch O d ead fate f men to see O most d eadful of all that ha met m n eyes! U happy n what madness hath c *e on thee?* Who is the nea thly foe that w th a bou d of m e than mort l ran e, hath made th e ill ta red l fe his p y?

Alas, las, thou hapless one! N y I can ot en look on thee, th u h there s m ch that I would fain ask, fai learn m ch that draw m istful gaze —w th su h a hudd ring d t thou fill m !

Oed Woe is me! Alas, las, wretched that I am! Whither whither *am I* bo n n my misery? How i my oic swept b oad on the wings f the air? Oh my F te, how far hast thou sprung!

Ch To dread place, dire in men s ears, dire in their sight.

Oed O th u horror of darkness that enfoldest me visitant nspeakable resistless, sped by a wind too fair!

Ay me! and once agai ay me!

How is my soul pierced by the stab f these goads, and withal by the memory of sorrow !

Ch Yea amid woes so many a twofold pain may well be th ne to mourn and to bear

Oed Ah friend thou still art steadfast in thy tend anc f me thou still hast patience to care for the bl nd man! Ah me! Thy presence is not hid from me—no, dark though I am yet know I thy vo ce full well

Ch Man of dread deeds, how couldst thou in such wise quench thy ision? What more than human power urged thee?

Oed Apollo fr ends, Apollo was he that brought these my woes to pass, these my sore sore woes but the ha d that struck the eyes wa none save *mine* wretched that I am! Why was I to see when sight could ho me nothi g sweet?

Ch These things were even as thou sayest

Oed Say f end what can I m re behold what can I love what g eet ng can touch m ne ear with j y? H ste lead m from the land friends, lead me h nce, the utterly lost the th ice accursed yea the mo tal most *bhorred of hea en!*

Ch Wret hed alike for thy fo tune and for thy sense thereof would that I had e r so much as known the !

Oed Perish the man whoe r he was, that freed me n the pastures from the cru l shackle on my feet and sa ed m f om death and gav m back to l fe—a thankles deed! Had I d ed then to my friends and t mine own soul I had ot been so sore a grief.

Ch I also w uld have had it th us

O d So had I not com to hed my fath r s blood no be n called among n n th spouse of her f om whom I prang but now m I f rsaken of the gods, so *of* a d filed moth e s ccessor to his bed who ga me min own wretched be ng and if the e be y t a woe *surpassing* oes, it hath become the por tion of Oed pus.

Ch I know not h w I ca say that thou ha t coun selled w ll f r thou we t better dead than living and blind

O d Show me not at large that these things are not best done thu g e m coun l o m e For had I si ht I know t y th what eyes I could e n ha e looked on my father when I came t the place of the lead ye o n my miserable mother s nce against both I ha e sur ed s h s s as st ngl n could n t punish. But deem ye that th s ght of hildr n born s m e w re bo n was lo ely f me to look upon? N no ot l v ly to *mine eyes* for e er! No or was this town w th its to ered walls, n the sa ed statues f the gods si ce I thrice w etched that I am—I oblest of the sons of Thebes —ha e *doomed myself to kn w these* more, by m own command that all should thrust aw y the impi us one—e en him wh m gods have shown to be unholy—and of the race of La us!

Oed Ha! chide him not old man—thy words need chiding more than his

He And wherein most noble master do I offend?

Oed In not telling of the boy concerning whom he asks

He He speaks without knowledge—he is busy to no purpose

Oed Thou wilt not speak with a good grace but thou shalt on pain

He Nay for the gods love misuse not an old man!

Oed Ho some one—pinion him this instant!

He Alas wherefore? what more wouldst thou learn?

Oed Didst thou give this man the child of whom he asks?

He I did—and would I had perished that day!

Oed Well thou wilt come to that unless thou tell the honest truth

He Nay much more am I lost if I speak

Oed The fellow is bent methinks on more delays

He No no! I said before that I gave it to him

Oed Whence hadst thou got it? In thine own house or from another?

He Mine own it was not—I had received it from a man

Oed From whom of the citizens here? from what home?

He Forbear for the gods love master forbear to ask more!

Oed Thou art lost if I have to question thee again

He It was a child then of the house of Laius

Oed A slave? or one born of his own race?

He Ah me—I am on the dreaded brink of speech

Oed And I of hearing yet must I hear

He Thou must know then that twas said to be his own child—but thy lady within could best say how these things are

Oed How? She gave it to thee?

He Yea O king

Oed For what end?

He That I should make away with it

Oed Her own child the wretch?

He Aye from fear of evil prophecies

Oed What were they?

He The tale ran that he must slay his sire

Oed Why then didst thou give him up to this old man?

He Through pity master as deeming that he would bear him away to another land whence he himself came but he saved him for the direst woe For if thou art what this man saith know that thou wast born to misery

Oed Oh oh! All brought to pass—all true! Thou light may I now look my last on thee—I who have been found accursed in birth accursed in wedlock accursed in the shedding of blood!

He rushes into the palace

Chorus

Alas ye generations of men how mere a shadow do I count your life! Where where is the mortal who wins more of happiness than just the seeming and after the semblance a falling away? Thine is a fate that warns me—thine thine unhappy Oedipus—to call no earthly creature blest

For he O Zeus sped his shaft with peerless skill and won the prize of an all prosperous fortune he slew the maiden with crooked talons who sang darkly he arose for our land as a tower against death And from that time Oedipus thou hast been called our king and hast been honoured supremely bearing sway in great Thebes

But now whose story is more grievous in mens ears? Who is a more wretched captive to fierce plagues and troubles with all his life reversed?

Alas renowned Oedipus! The same bounteous place of rest sufficed thee as child and as sire also that thou shouldst make thereon thy nuptial couch Oh how can the soil wherein thy father sowed unhappy one have suffered thee in silence so long?

Time the all seeing hath found thee out in thy despite he judgeth the monstrous marriage wherein begetter and begotten have long been one

Alas thou child of Laius would would that I had never seen thee! I wail as one who pours a dirge from his lips sooth to speak twas thou that gavest me new life and through thee darkness hath fallen upon mine eyes

Enter SECOND MESSENGER *from the house*

Second Messenger Ye who are ever most honoured in this land what deeds shall ye hear what deeds behold what burden of sorrow shall be yours if true to your race ye still care for the house of Labdacus! For I ween that not Ister nor Phasis could wash this house clean so many are the ills that it shrouds or will soon bring to light—ills wrought not unwittingly but of purpose And those griefs smart most which are seen to be of our own choice

Ch Indeed those which we knew before fall not short of claiming sore lamentation besides them what dost thou announce?

2 Me This is the shortest tale to tell and to hear our royal lady Iocasta is dead

Ch Alas hapless one! From what cause?

2 Me By her own hand The worst pain in what hath chanced is not for you for yours it is not to behold Nevertheless so far as mine own memory serves ye shall learn that unhappy womans fate

When frantic she had passed within the vestibule she rushed straight towards her nuptial couch clutching her hair with the fingers of both hands once within the chamber she dashed the doors together at her back then called on the name of Laius long since a corpse mindful of that son begotten long ago by whom the sire was slain leaving the mother to breed accursed offspring with his own

And she bewailed the wedlock wherein wretched she had borne a twofold brood husband by husband children by her child And how thereafter she perished is more than I know For with a shriek Oedipus burst in and suffered us not to watch her woe unto the end on him as he rushed around our eyes were set To and fro he went asking us to give him

you: and who then will wed? The man lives not, no, it cannot be, my children, but ye must wither in barren maidenhood.

Ah, son of Menoeceus, hear me—since thou art the only father left to them, for we, their parents, are lost, both of us—allow them not to wander poor and unwed, who are thy kinswomen, nor abase them to the level of my woes. Nay, pity them, when thou seest them at this tender age so utterly forlorn, save for thee. Signify thy promise, generous man, by the touch of thy hand! To you, my children, I would have given much counsel, were your minds mature; but now I would have this to be your prayer—that ye live where occasion suffers, and that the life which is your portion may be happier than your sire's.

Cr. Thy grief hath had large scope enough: now pass into the house.

Oed. I must obey, though 'tis in no wise sweet.

Cr. Yea: for it is in season that all things are good.

Oed. Knowest thou, then, on what conditions I will go?

Cr. Thou shalt name them; so shall I know them when I hear.

Oed. See that thou send me to dwell beyond this land.

Cr. Thou askest me for what the god must give.

Oed. Nay, to the gods I have become most hateful.

Cr. Then shalt thou have thy wish anon.

Oed. So thou consentest?

Cr. 'Tis not my wont to speak idly what I do not mean.

Oed. Then 'tis time to lead me hence.

Cr. Come, then,—but let thy children go.

Oed. Nay, take not these from me!

Cr. Crave not to be master in all things: for the mastery which thou didst win hath not followed thee through life.

Ch. Dwellers in our native Thebes, behold, this is Oedipus, who knew the famed riddle, and was a man most mighty; on whose fortunes what citizen did not gaze with envy? Behold into what a stormy sea of dread trouble he hath come!

Therefore, while our eyes wait to see the destined final day, we must call no one happy who is of mortal race, until he hath crossed life's border, free from pain.

After bearing such a stain upon me was I to look with steady eyes on this folk? No verily no were there yet a way to choke the fount of hearing I had not spared to make a fast prison of this wretched frame *that so I should have known nor sight nor* sound for tis sweet that our thought should dwell beyond the sphere of griefs

Alas Cithaeron why hadst thou a shelter for me? When I was given to thee why didst thou not slay me straightway that so I might never have revealed my source to men? Ah Polybus ah Corinth and thou that wast called the ancient house of my fathers how seeming fair was I your nurseling and what ills were festering beneath! For now I am found evil and of evil birth O ye three roads and thou secret glen—thou coppice and narrow way where three paths met—ye who drank from my hands that father s blood which was mine own—remember ye, perchance what deeds I wrought for you to see—and then when I came hither what fresh deeds I went on to do?

O marriage rites ye gave me birth and when ye had brought me forth again ye bore children to your child ye created an incestuous kinship of fathers brothers sons—brides wives mothers—yea all the foulest shame that is wrought among men! Nay but tis unmeet to name what tis unmeet to do —haste ye for the gods love hide me somewhere beyond the land or slay me or cast me into the sea where ye shall never behold me more! Approach deign to lay your hands on a wretched man hearken fear not —my plague can rest on no mortal beside

Enter CREON

Ch Nay here is Creon in meet season for thy requests crave they act or counsel for he alone is left to guard the land in thy stead

Oed Ah me how indeed shall I accost him? What claim to credence can be shown on my part? For in the past I have been found wholly false to him

Cr I have not come in mockery Oedipus nor to reproach thee with any bygone fault (*To the attendants*) *But ye if ye respect the children of men no* more revere at least the all nurturing flame of our lord the Sun spare to show thus nakedly a pollution such as this—one which neither earth can welcome nor the holy rain nor the light Nay take him into the house as quickly as ye may for it best accords with piety that kinsfolk alone should see and hear kinsman s woes

Oed For the god love—since thou hast done a gentle violence to my presage who hast come in a spirit so noble to me a man most vile—grant me a boon for thy good I will speak not for mine own

Cr And what wish art thou so fain to have of me?

Oed Cast me out of this land with all speed to a place where no mortal shall be found to greet me more

Cr This would I have done be thou sure but that I craved first to learn all my duty from the god

Oed Nay his behest hath been set forth in full—to let me perish the parricide the unholy one that I am

Cr Such was the purport yet seeing to what a pass we have come tis better to learn clearly what should be done

Oed Will ye then seek a response on behalf of such a wretch as I am?

Cr Aye for thou thyself wilt now surely put faith in the god

Oed Yea and on thee lay I this charge to thee will I make this entreaty give to her who is within such burial as thou thyself wouldest for thou wilt meetly render the last rites to thine own But for me—never let this city of my sire be condemned to have me dwelling therein while I live no suffer me to abide on the hills where yonder is Cithaeron famed as mine—which my mother and sire while *they lived set for my appointed tomb*—that so I may die by their decree who sought to slay me Howbeit of thus much am I sure—that neither sickness nor aught else can destroy me for never had I been snatched from death but in reserve for some strange doom

Nay let *my* fate go whither it will but as touching my children I pray thee Creon take no care on thee for my sons they are men so that be they where they may they can never lack the means to live But my two girls poor hapless ones—who never knew my table spread apart or lacked their father s presence but ever in all things shared my daily bread—I pray thee care for *them* and—if thou canst—suffer me to touch them with my hands and to indulge my grief Grant it prince grant it thou noble heart! Ah could I but once touch them with my hands I should think that they were with me even as when I had sight

Creon s attendants lead in the children ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE

Ha? O ye gods can it be my loved ones that I hear sobbing can Creon have taken pity on me and sent me my *children—my darlings? Am I right?*

Cr Yea tis of my contriving for I knew thy joy in them of old the joy that now is thine

Oed Then blessed be thou and for guerdon of *this errand may heaven prove to thee a kinder* guardian than it hath to me! My children where are ye? Come hither hither to the hands of *him* whose mother was your own the hands whose offices have wrought that your sire s once bright eyes should be such orbs as these—his who seeing nought knowing nought became your father by her from whom he sprang! For you also do I weep—behold you I cannot—when I think of the bitter life in days to come which men will make you live To what company of the citizens will ye go to what festival from which ye shall not return home in tears instead of sharing in the holiday? But when ye are now come to years ripe for marriage who shall he be who shall be the man my daughters that will hazard taking unto him such reproaches as must be baneful alike to my offspring and to yours? For what misery is wanting? Your sire slew his sire he had seed of her who bare him and begat you at the sources of his own being! Such are the taunts that will be cast at

Oed. Tha by small service he may find a great gain.

S. And what help can be from one who sees not?

Oed. In all that I speak there shall be sight.

S. Mark me now, friend—I would not have thee come to harm, for thou art noble, if one may judge by thy looks, leaving thy fortune aside; stay here e en where I found thee, till I go and tell these things to the folk on this spot, not in the town: they will decide for thee whether thou shalt abide or retire. *Exit*

Oed. My child, say, is the stranger gone?

An. He is gone, and so thou canst utter what thou wilt, father, in quietness, as knowing that I alone am near.

Oed. Queens of dread aspect, since your seat is the first in this land whereat I have bent the knee, show not yourselves ungracious to Phoebus or to myself, who, when he proclaimed that doom of many woes, spake of this as a rest for me after long years—on reaching my goal in a land where I should find a seat of the Awful Goddesses, and hospitable shelter—even that there I should close my weary life, with benefits, through my having dwelt therein, for my hosts, but ruin for those who sent me forth—who drove me away. And he went on to warn me that signs of these things should come, in earthquake, or in thunder, haply, or in the lightning of Zeus.

Now I perceive that in this journey some faithful omen from you hath surely led me home to this grove: never else could I have met with you, first of all, in my wanderings—I, the austere, with you who delight not in wine—or taken this solemn seat not shaped by man.

Then, goddesses, according to the word of Apollo, give me at last some way to accomplish and close my course—unless, perchance, I seem beneath your grace, thrall that I am evermore to woes the sorest on the earth. Hear, sweet daughters of primeval Darkness! Hear, thou that art called the city of great Pallas—Athens, of all cities most honoured! Pity this poor wraith of Oedipus—for verily 'tis the man of old no more.

An. Hush! Here come some aged men, I wot, to spy out thy resting-place.

Oed. I will be mute,—and do thou hide me in the grove, apart from the road, till I learn how these men will speak; for in knowledge is the safeguard of our course. *Exeunt*

The CHORUS OF ELDERS OF COLONUS *enter the orchestra from the right of the spectators, as if in eager search.*

Chor. Give heed—who was he, then? Where lodges he?—whither hath he rushed from this place, insolent, he, above all who live? Scan the ground, look well, urge the quest in every part.

A wanderer that old man must have been,—a wanderer, not a dweller in the land; else never would he have advanced into this untrodden grove of the maidens with whom none may strive, whose name we tremble to speak, by whom we pass with eyes turned away, moving our lips, without sound or word, in still devotion.

But now 'tis rumoured that one hath come who in no wise reveres them; and him I cannot yet discern, though I look round all the holy place, nor wot I where to find his lodging.

Oed. (*stepping forward with* ANTIGONE *from his place of concealment in the grove*) Behold the man whom ye seek! for in sound is my sight, as the saying hath it.

Ch. O! O!

Dread to see, and dread to hear!

Oed. Regard me not, I entreat you, as a lawless one.

Ch. Zeus defend us! who may the old man be?

Oed. Not wholly of the best fortune, that ye should envy him, O guardians of this land! 'Tis plain: else would I not be walking thus by the eyes of others, and buoying my strength upon weakness.

Ch. Alas! wast thou sightless e en from thy birth? Evil have been thy days, and many, to all seeming; but at least, if I can help, thou shalt not add this curse to thy doom. Too far thou goest—too far! But, lest thy rash steps intrude on the sward of yonder voiceless glade, where the bowl of water blends its stream with the flow of honied offerings (be thou well ware of such trespass, unhappy stranger)—retire, withdraw! A wide space parts us: hearest thou, toil-worn wanderer? If thou hast aught to say in converse with us, leave forbidden ground, and speak where it is lawful for all; but, till then, refrain.

Oed. Daughter, to what counsel shall we incline?

An. My father, we must conform us to the customs of the land, yielding where 'tis meet, and hearkening.

Oed. Then give me thy hand.

An. 'Tis laid in thine.

Oed. Strangers, oh let me not suffer wrong when I have trusted in you, and have passed from my refuge!

Ch. Never, old man, never shall any one remove thee from this place of rest against thy will.

OEDIPUS *now begins to move forward.*

Oed. (*pausing in his gradual advance*) Further, then?

Ch. Come still further.

Oed. (*having advanced another step*) Further?

Ch. Lead him onward, maiden, for thou understandest.

[A verse for ANTIGONE, a verse for OEDIPUS, and then another verse for ANTIGONE, seem to have been lost here.]

An. . . . Come, follow me this way with thy dark steps, father, as I lead thee.

[Here has been lost a verse for OEDIPUS.]

Ch. A stranger in a strange land, ah, hapless one, incline thy heart to abhor that which the city holds in settled hate, and to reverence what she loves!

Oed. Lead me thou, then, child, to a spot where I may speak and listen within piety's domain, and let us not wage war with necessity.

Moving forward, he now sets foot on a platform of rock at the verge of the grove.

Ch. There!—bend not thy steps beyond that floor of native rock.

OEDIPUS AT COLONUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

OEDIPUS	CREON *of Thebes*
ANTIGONE, ISMENE *his daughters*	POLYNEICES *the elder son of Oedipus*
STRANGER *a man of Colonus*	A MESSENGER
THESEUS *King of Athens*	CHORUS OF ELDERS OF COLONUS

At Colonus about a mile and a quarter N W of Athens in front of a grove sacred to the Erinyes or Furies—there worshipped under the propitiatory name of the Eumenides or Kindly Powers Enter OEDIPUS *blind led by* ANTIGONE

Oedipus Daughter of the blind old man to what region have we come Antigone or what city of men? Who will entertain the wandering Oedipus to day with scanty gifts? Little crave I and win yet less than that little and therewith am content for patience is the lesson of suffering and of the years in our long fellowship and lastly of a noble mind My child if thou seest any resting place whether on profane ground or by groves of the gods stay me and set me down that we may inquire where we are for we stand in need to learn as strangers of denizens and to perform their bidding

Antigone Father toil worn Oedipus the towers that guard the city to judge by sight are far off and this place is sacred to all seeming—thick set with laurel olive vine and in its heart a feathered choir of nightingales makes music So sit thee here on this unhewn stone thou hast travelled a long way for an old man

Oed Seat me then and watch over the blind

An If time can teach I need not to learn that

Oed Canst thou tell me now where we have arrived?

An Athens I know but not this place

Oed Aye so much every wayfarer told us

An Well shall I go and learn how the spot is called?

Oed Yes child—if indeed tis habitable

An Nay inhabited it surely is but I think there is no need yonder I see a man near us

Oed Hitherward moving and setting forth?

An Nay he is at our side already Speak as the moment prompts thee for the man is here

Enter STRANGER *a man of Colonus*

Oed Stranger hearing from this maiden who hath sight for herself and for me that thou hast drawn nigh with timely quest for the solving of our doubts—

Stranger Now ere thou question me at large quit this seat for thou art on ground which tis not lawful to tread

Oed And what is this ground? To what deity sacred?

St Ground inviolable whereon none may dwell for the dread goddesses hold it the daughters of Earth and Darkness

Oed Who may they be whose awful name I am to hear and invoke?

St The all seeing Eumenides the folk here would call them but other names please otherwhere

Oed Then graciously may they receive their suppliant! for nevermore will I depart from my rest in this land

St What means this?

Oed Tis the watchword of my fate

St Nay for my part I dare not remove thee without warrant from the city ere I report what I am doing

Oed Now for the gods love stranger refuse me not hapless wanderer that I am the knowledge for which I sue to thee

St Speak and from me thou shalt find no refusal

Oed What then is the place that we have entered?

St All that I know thou shalt learn from my mouth This whole place is sacred awful Poseidon holds it and therein is the fire fraught god the Titan Prometheus but as for the spot whereon thou treadest tis called the Brazen Threshold of this land the stay of Athens and the neighbouring fields claim yon knight Colonus for their primal lord and all the people bear his name in common for their own Such thou mayest know stranger are these haunts not honoured in story but rather in the life that loves them

Oed Are there indeed dwellers in this region?

St Yea surely the namesakes of yonder god

Oed Have they a king? Or doth speech rest with the folk

St These parts are ruled by the king in the city

Oed And who is thus sovereign in counsel and in might?

St Theseus he is called son of Aegeus who was before him

Oed Could a messenger go for him from among you?

St With what aim to speak or to prepare his coming?

a lands so that, even if he is taking his ease, and slow to move, when he hears of *thee* he will arrive with speed.

Oed. Well, may he come with a blessing to his own city as to me!—What good man is not his own friend?

A. O Zeus! what shall I say, what shall I think, my father?

Oed. What is it, Antigone, my child?

An. I see a woman coming towards us, mounted on a colt of Etna; she wears a Thessalian bonnet to screen her face from the sun. What shall I say? Is it she or is it not? Doth fancy cheat me? Yes—no—I cannot tell—ah me! It is no other—yes!—she greets me with bright glances as she draws nigh, and shows that Ismene, and no other, is before me.

Oed. What sayest thou, my child?

An. That I see thy daughter and my sister; thou canst know her straightway by her voice.

Enter ISMENE.

Ismene. Father and sister, names most sweet to me! How hardly have I found you! and now I scarce can see you for my tears.

Oed. My child, thou hast come?

I. Ah, father, sad is thy fate to see!

Oed. Thou art with us, my child!

Is. And it hath cost me toil.

Oed. Touch me, my daughter!

Is. I give a hand to each.

Oed. Ah, children—ah, ye sisters!

Is. Alas, twice wretched life!

Oed. Hers and mine?

I. And mine, hapless, with you twain.

Oed. Child, and why hast thou come?

Is. Through care, father, for thee.

Oed. Through longing to see me?

I. Yes, and to bring thee tidings by mine own mouth,—with the only faithful servant that I had.

Oed. And where are the young men thy brothers at our need?

I. They are—where they are: 'tis their dark hour.

Oed. O true image of the ways of Egypt that they show in their spirit and their life! For there the men sit weaving in the house, but the wives go forth to win the daily bread. And in your case, my daughters, those to whom these toils belonged keep the house at home like girls, while ye, in their stead, bear your hapless father's burden.

One, from the time when her tender age was past and she came to a woman's strength, hath ever been the old man's guide in weary wanderings, oft roaming hungry and barefoot through the wild wood, oft sore vexed by rain and *scorching* heat—but regarding not the comforts of home, if so her father should have tendance.

And thou, my child, in former days camest forth, bringing thy father all the oracles that had been given touching Oedipus' body, unknown of the Cadmeans, and thou didst take on thee the office of a faithful watcher in my behalf, when I was being driven from the land. And now what new tidings hast thou brought thy father, Ismene? On what mission hast thou set forth from home? For thou comest not empty-handed, well I wot, or without some word of fear for me.

Is. The sufferings that I bore, father, in seeking where thou wast living, I will pass by; I would not renew the pain in the recital. But the ills that now beset thine ill-fated sons—'tis of these that I have come to tell thee.

At first it was their desire that the throne should be left to Creon, and the city spared pollution, when they thought calmly on the blight of the race from of old, and how it hath clung to thine ill-starred house. But now, moved by some god and by a sinful mind, an evil rivalry hath seized them, thrice infatuate!—to grasp at rule and kingly power.

And the hot-brained youth, the younger born, hath deprived the elder, Polyneices, of the throne, and hath driven him from his fatherland. But he, as the general rumour saith among us, hath gone, an exile, to the hill-girt Argos, and is taking unto him a new kinship, and warriors for his friends,—as deeming that Argos shall soon possess the Cadmean land in honour, or lift that land's praise to the stars.

These are no vain words, my father, but deeds terrible; and where the gods will have pity *on* thy griefs, I *cannot* tell.

Oed. What, hadst thou come to hope that the gods would ever look on me for my deliverance?

Is. Yea, mine is that hope, father, from the present oracles.

Oed. What are they? What hath been prophesied, my child?

Is. That thou shalt yet be desired, alive and dead, by the men of that land, for their welfare's sake.

Oed. And who could have good of such an one as I?

Is. Their power, 'tis said, comes to be in *thy* hand.

Oed. When I am nought, in that hour then, I am *a man?*

Is. Yea, for the gods lift thee *now*, but before they were working thy ruin.

Oed. 'Tis little to lift age, when youth was ruined.

I. Well, know at least, that Creon will come to thee *in* this cause—and rather soon than late.

Oed. With what purpose, daughter? expound to me.

Is. To plant thee near the Cadmean land, so that they may have thee in their grasp, but thou *mayest* not set foot on their borders.

Oed. And how can I advantage them while I rest beyond *their* gates?

I. Thy tomb hath a *curse for* them, if all be not well with it.

Oed. It needs no god to help our wit so far.

Is. Well, therefore they would fain acquire thee as a neighbour, in a place where thou shalt not be thine own master.

Oed. Will they also shroud me in Theban dust?

Is. Nay, the guilt of a kinsman's blood debars thee, father.

Oed. Then never shall they become my masters.

Is. Some day, then, this shall be a grief for the Cadmeans.

Oed Thus far?

Ch Enough I tell thee

Oed Shall I sit down?

Ch Yea move sideways and crouch low on the edge of the rock

An Father this is my task to quiet step (*Oed* Ah me! ah me!) knit step and lean thy aged frame upon my loving arm

Oed Woe for the doom of a dark soul!

ANTIGONE *seats him on the rock*

Ch Ah hapless one since now thou hast ease speak —whence art thou sprung? In what name art thou led on thy weary way? What is the fatherland whereof thou hast to tell us?

Oed Strangers I am an exile—but forbear

Ch What is this that thou forbiddest old man?

Oed —forbear forbear to ask me who I am seek—probe—no further!

Ch What means this?

Oed Dread the birth

Ch Speak!

Oed (*to* ANTIGONE) My child—alas!—what shall I say?

Ch What is thy lineage stranger—speak!—and who thy sire?

Oed Woe is me!—What will become of me my child?

An Speak for thou art driven to the verge

Oed Then speak I will—I have no way to hide it

Ch Ye twain make a long delay—come haste thee!

Oed Know ye a son of Laius O! (*The* CHORUS *utter a cry*) and the race of the Labdacidae?

Ch O Zeus!

Oed The hapless Oedipus?

Ch Thou art he?

Oed Have no fear of any words that I speak—

The CHORUS *drown his voice with a great shout of execration half turning away and holding their mantles before their eyes*

Oed Unhappy that I am! (*The clamour of the* CHORUS *continues*) Daughter what is about to befall?

Ch Out with you! forth from the land!

Oed And thy promise—to what fulfilment wilt thou bring it?

Ch No man is visited by fate if he requites deeds which were first done to himself deceit on the one part matches deceits on the other and gives pain instead of benefit for reward And thou—back with thee! out from these seats! avaunt! away from my land with all speed lest thou fasten some heavier burden on my city!

An Strangers of reverent soul since ye have not borne with mine aged father—knowing as ye do the rumour of his unpurposed deeds—pity at least my hapless self I implore you who supplicate you for my sire alone supplicate you with eyes that can still look on your own even as though I were sprung from your own blood that the sufferer may find compassion

On you as on a god we depend in our misery Nay hear us! grant the boon for which we scarce dare hope! By everything sprung from you that ye hold dear I implore you yea by child—by wife or treasure or god! Look well and thou wilt not find the mortal who if a god should lead him on could escape

Ch Nay be thou sure daughter of Oedipus, we pity thee and him alike for your fortune but dreading the judgment of the gods we could not say aught beyond what hath now been said to thee

Oed What good comes then of repute or fair fame if it ends in idle breath seeing that Athens, as men say has the perfect fear of Heaven and the power above all cities to shelter the vexed stranger and the power above all to succour him?

And where find I these things when after making me rise up from these rocky seats ye then drive me from the land *afraid of my name alone*? Not surely afraid of my person or of mine acts since mine acts, at least have been in suffering rather than doing—were it seemly that I should tell you the story of my *mother or my sire by reason whereof ye dread me*—that know I full well

And yet in *nature* how was I evil? I who was but requiting a wrong so that had I been acting with *knowledge even then I could not be* accounted wicked but as it was all unknowing went I—whither I went—while they who wronged me knowingly sought my ruin

Wherefore strangers I beseech you by the gods even as ye made me leave my seat so protect me and do not while ye honour the gods refuse to give those gods their due but rather deem that they *look on the god fearing among men and* on the godless and that never yet hath escape been found for an impious mortal on the earth

With the help of those gods spare to cloud the *bright fame of Athens by ministering* to unholy deeds but as ye have received the suppliant under your pledge rescue me and guard me to the end nor scorn me when ye look on this face unlovely to *behold for I have come to you as one* sacred and pious and fraught with comfort for this people But when the master is come whosoever he be that is your chief then shall ye hear and know all meanwhile *in no wise show yourself false*

Ch The thoughts urged on thy part old man must needs move awe they have been set forth in words not light but I am content that the rulers of our country should judge in this cause

Oed And where strangers is the lord of this realm?

Ch He is at the city of his father in our land and the messenger who sent us hither hath gone to fetch him

Oed Think ye that he will have any regard or care for the blind man so as to come hither himself?

Ch Yea surely so soon as he learns thy name

Oed Who is there to bring him that message?

Ch The way is long and many rumours from wayfarers are wont to go abroad when he hears them he will soon be with us fear not For thy name old man hath been mightily noised through

Ch. —of that grie ous an uish found cureless, erewith th u ha wrestled

Oed. By th k odness for a guest bare not the ame that I ha e suffered!

Ch. Seein in sooth that the tale s wide spread and in no se wa es, I am fain friend to hear it a ht.

Oed. Woe is me!

Ch. Be content I pray thee!

Oed. Alas, alas!

Ch. Gra t my wish as I ha e granted thine in its f ss.

Oed. I ha e suff red misery str n ers, suffered it thro h unw tt g deeds, and of those acts—be Hea en my wit ess!—no part was of m e own choice.

Ch. B t in what regard?

Oed. By a e il wedlock Thebes bound me all unknow n t th bride that wa m curse

Ch. Ca it be as I hear that thou madest thy mot th partner of th bed f its infamy?

Oed. Woe is me! Cru l as death stra ers, are these words in m ne ear —but those maidens, be go ten of me—

Ch. What t thou sa ?—

Oed. —t o daught rs—two curses—

Ch. O Zeu

Oed. —spra g from the tra ail of the womb that bore me

Ch. These then ar at once thine offspring and

Oed. — ea rs si t rs of their si e

Ch. Oh, horror!

Oed. Horror ndeed—yea horrors untold sweep ba k upon m soul

Ch. Thou ha t ff red—

Oed. S ff ed woes d ead to bear—

Ch. Thou ha t sin ed—

Oed. N wilf l sin—

Ch. How —

Oed. A gift wa gi en to me—O b ken hearted that I m, would I had r won f om Thebes that meed for ha served h !

Ch. W et h! How th n th hand shed blood?

Oed. Wh f re th What ould t thou learn?

Ch. A father blood

Oed. Oh! oh! second t b—wound on wound!

Ch. Sla !

Oed. A sla e— t ha I a plea—

Ch. What canst thou plead —

Oed. — p ea i justi

Ch. What

Oed. Y shall hear t they wl om I slew would ha e taken m own lif tainless bef the law oid f malic ha I om nto this pass!

Ch. Lo, ond m h u prin Theseu son f Aegeus, h t doth part wh reu to f summoned

F — ec a rs right

These Hearn from ma t m pa t o rr th n l mar f th ht I ha e recog ised th so f La us nd ow th h hearsay in this my comi g I ha th f ll ta nt For thy garb and that hapless face al ke assure me of thy name and in all compass on would I a k thee ill fated Oedipus, what i thy suit to Athens or to me that thou ha t taken th place here thou and the hapless maiden at thy side Declare it dire in deed mu t be the f rtune t ld by thee from which I sho ild stand aloof who kn w that I myself also was reared in exile l ke to thin and n strange lands wrestled with perils to my l fe as no man be side Ne er then woul I I turn aside from a stran ger such as th u art n w or refuse to aid in his d li erance for well know I that I am a man and that in the morrow my port on is no greater than thine

Oed. Theseus, thy noblenes h th n br ef words shown such grace that f r me there i need to say but little Thou ha t r htl sa I who I m from what si e I prung f om what land I have come and so nou ht else rema ns f r me but to speak my desire —and the tal i told.

Th. E en so—speak that—I fa n would hear

Oed. I com t off r thee my woe worn body as a gift— ot goodly to look upon but the gains from it are bette than beauty

Th. And what gain dost thou claim to have b ought?

Oed. He eafter thou shalt learn not yet I think.

Th. At what time th n will thy be efit be hown?

Oed. When I am dead and thou hast giv n me burial

Th. Th u cravest l fe boon for all betw een thou hast o m mory—or no care

Oed. Yea f r by that boon I reap all the rest

Th. N y th n thi grace wh ch thou cravest from m hath small compass.

Oed. Y t gi heed th ss is o l ght one—no, ver ly

Th. Meanest thou a betwee thy son nd me?

Oed. Kin they would f n n e me to Thebes.

Th. But if t thy onse t then for thee exile is not seemly

Oed. N wh n I was w ll g they r fused

Th. But fool h man temper i m sfortu e s not meet

Oed. Wh n th u ha t heard my tory chide till then forbea

Th. Say on I must n t p onou c w tho t knowl ed

Oed. I ha suffered Theseus, cru l wrong on wro

Th. W lt thou speak of the an nt trouble of thy race?

Oed. N e l th no ed throughout Hellas.

Th. Wh t th i thy g i f th t passeth th g t f man

Oed. Thu i is th m From my cou try I have been dri n b m e o n off p i g a d m doom i t et m o m g lty of fath r s blood

Th. How then hould th y f tch thee to th m f n u t dwel apa t?

Oed. Th mouth f the god will constra n them

Oed In what conjuncture of events my child?

Is By force of thy wrath when they take their stand at thy tomb

Oed And who hath told thee what thou tellest my child?

Is Sacred envoys from the Delphian hearth

Oed And Phoebus hath indeed spoken thus concerning me?

Is So say the men who have come back to Thebes

Oed Hath either of my sons then heard this?

Is Yea both have heard and know it well

Oed And then those base ones aware of this held the kingship dearer than the wish to recall me?

Is It grieves me to hear that but I must bear it

Oed Then may the gods quench not their fated strife and may it become mine to decide this warfare whereto they are now setting their hands spear against spear! For then neither should he abide who now holds the sceptre and the throne nor should the banished one ever return seeing that when I their sire was being thrust so shamefully from my country they hindered not nor defended me no they saw me sent forth homeless they heard my doom of exile cried aloud

Thou wilt say that it was mine own wish then and that the city meetly granted me that boon No verily for in that first day when my soul was seething and my darling wish was for death aye death by stoning no one was found to help me in that desire but after a time when all my anguish was now assuaged and when I began to feel that my wrath had run too far in punishing those past errors then it was that the city on her part went about to drive me perforce from the land—after all that time and my sons when they might have brought help—the sons to the sire—would not do it no—for lack of one little word from them I was left to wander an outcast and a beggar evermore

Tis to these sisters girls as they are that so far as nature enables them I owe my daily food and a shelter in the land and the offices of kinship the brothers have bartered their sire for a throne and sceptred sway and rule of the realm Nay never shall they win Oedipus for an ally nor shall good ever come to them from this reign at Thebes that know I when I hear this maiden s oracles and meditate the old prophecies stored in mine own mind which Phoebus hath fulfilled for me at last

Therefore let them send Creon to seek me and whoso beside is mighty in Thebes For if ye strangers —with the championship of the dread goddesses who dwell among your folk—are willing to succour ye shall procure a great deliverer for this State and troubles for my foes

Ch Right worthy art thou of compassion Oedipus thou and these maidens and since to this plea thou addest thy power to save our land I fain would advise thee for thy weal

Oed Kind sir be sure then that I will obey in all —stand thou my friend

Ch Now make atonement to these deities to whom thou hast first come and on whose ground thou hast trespassed

Oed With what rites? instruct me strangers.

Ch First from a perennial spring fetch holy drink offerings borne in clean hands

Oed And when I have gotten this pure draught?

Ch Bowls there are the work of a cunning craftsman crown their edges and the handles at either brim

Oed With branches or woollen cloths or in what wise?

Ch Take the freshly shorn wool of an ewe lamb

Oed Good and then—to what last rite shall I proceed?

Ch Pour thy drink offerings with thy face to the dawn

Oed With these vessels whereof thou speakest shall I pour them?

Ch Yea in three streams but empty the last vessel wholly

Oed Wherewith shall I fill this ere I set it? Tell me this also

Ch With water and honey but bring no wine thereto

Oed And when the ground under the dark shade hath drunk of these?

Ch Lay on it thrice nine sprays of olive with both thine hands and make this prayer the while

Oed The prayer I fain would hear— tis of chief moment

Ch That as we call them Benign Powers with hearts benign they may receive the suppliant for saving be this the prayer—thine own or his who prays for thee speak inaudibly and lift not up thy voice then retire without looking behind Thus do and I would be bold to stand by thee but otherwise stranger I would fear for thee

Oed Daughters hear ye these strangers who dwell near?

An We have listened and do thou bid us what to do

Oed I cannot go for I am disabled by lack of strength and lack of sight evils twain But let one of you two go and do these things For I think that one soul suffices to pay this debt for ten thousand if it come with good will to the shrine Act then with speed yet leave me not solitary for the strength would fail me to move without help or guiding hand

Is Then I will go to perform the rite but where I am to find the spot—this I fain would learn

Ch On the further side of this grove maiden And if thou hast need of aught there is a guardian of the place who will direct thee

Is So to my task but thou Antigone watch our father here In parents cause if toil there be we must not reck of toil

Exit

Ch Dread is it stranger to arouse the old grief that hath so long been laid to rest and yet I yearn to hear

Oed What now?

An. Yonder is Creon drawing near us—not without followers, father.

Oed. Ah, kind elders, now give me, I pray you, the final proof of my safety!

Ch. Fear not—it shall be thine. If I am aged, this country's strength hath not grown old.

Enter CREON, *with attendants*

Creon. Sirs, noble dwellers in this land, I see that a sudden fear hath troubled your eyes at my coming; but shrink not from me, and let no ungentle word escape you.

I am here with no thought of force; I am old, and I know that the city whereunto I have come is mighty, if any in Hellas hath might; no, I have been sent, in these my years, to plead with yonder man that he return with me to the land of Cadmus; not one man's envoy am I, but with charge from our people all; since 'twas mine, by kinship, to mourn his woes most in Thebes. beside

Nay, unhappy Oedipus, hear us, and come home! Rightfully art thou called by all the Cadmean folk, and in chief by me, even as I—unless I am the basest of all men born—chiefly sorrow for thine ills, old man, when I see thee, hapless one, a stranger and a wanderer evermore, roaming in beggary, with one handmaid for thy stay. Alas, I had not thought that she could fall to such a depth of misery as that whereunto she hath fallen—yon hapless girl!—while she ever tends thy dark life amid penury—in ripe youth, but unwed—a prize for the first rude hand.

Is it not a cruel reproach—alas!—that I have cast at thee, and me, and all our race? But indeed an open shame cannot be hid; then—in the name of thy fathers' gods, hearken to me, Oedipus!—hide it thou by consenting to return to the city and the house of thy fathers, after a kindly farewell to this State—for she is worthy: yet thine own hath the first claim on thy piety, since 'twas she that nurtured thee of old.

Oed. All-daring, who from any plea of right wouldst draw a crafty device, why dost thou attempt me thus, and seek once more to take me in the toils where capture would be sorest? In the old days—when, distempered by my self-wrought woes, I yearned to be cast out of the land—thy will went not with mine to grant the boon. But when my fierce grief had spent its force, and the seclusion of the house was sweet, *then* wast thou for thrusting me from the house and *from the land*—nor had this kinship any dearness for thee *then*; and now, again—when thou seest that I have kindly welcome from this city and from all her sons, *thou seekest* to pluck me away, wrapping hard thoughts in soft words. And yet what joy is there in this—in kindness shown to us against our will? As if a man should give thee no gift, bring thee no aid, when thou wast fain for the boon; but after thy soul's desire was sated, should grant it then, when the grace could be gracious no more: wouldst thou not find that pleasure vain? Yet such are thine own offers unto me,—good in name, but in their substance evil.

And I will declare it to these also, that I may show thee false. Thou hast come to fetch me, not that thou mayest take me home, but that thou mayest plant me near thy borders, and so thy city may escape unscathed by troubles from this land. *That* portion is not for thee, but *this*—my curse upon the country, ever abiding therein; and for my sons, this heritage—room enough in my realm wherein—to die.

Am I not wiser than thou in the fortunes of Thebes? Yea, wiser far, as truer are the sources of my knowledge, even Phoebus, and his father, Zeus most high. But thou hast come hither with fraud on thy lips, yea, with a tongue *keener than the edge of the sword*; yet by thy pleading thou art like to reap more woe than weal. Howbeit, I know that I persuade thee not of this—go!—and suffer us to live here; for even in this plight our life would not be evil, so were we content therewith.

Cr. Which, thinkest thou, most suffers in this parley—I by thy course, or thou by thine own?

Oed. For me, 'tis enough if thy pleading fails, as with me, so with yon men are nigh.

Cr. Unhappy man, shall it be seen that not even thy years have brought thee wit? Must thou live to be the reproach of age?

Oed. Thou hast a ready tongue, but *I know not* the honest man who hath fair words for every cause.

Cr. Words may be many, and yet may miss their aim.

Oed. As if *thine*, forsooth, were few, but aimed aright.

Cr. No, truly, for one whose wit is such as thine.

Oed. Depart—for I will say it in the name of yon men also!—and beset me not with jealous watch in the place where I am destined to abide.

Cr. These men—not thee—call I to witness: but as for the strain of thine answer to thy kindred, if ever I take thee—

Oed. And who could take me in despite of these allies?

Cr. I promise thee, thou soon shalt smart without that.

Oed. Where is the deed which warrants that blustering *word*?

Cr. One of thy two daughters hath just been seized by me, and sent hence—the other I will remove forthwith.

Oed. Woe is me!

Cr. More woeful thou wilt find it soon.

Oed. Thou hast my child?

Cr. And will have this one ere long.

Oed. Alas! friends, what will ye do? Will ye forsake me? will ye *not drive* the godless man from this land?

Ch. Hence, stranger, hence—begone! Unrighteous is thy present deed—unrighteous the deed which thou hast done.

Cr. (*to his attendants*) 'Twere time for you to lead off yon girl perforce, if she will not go of her free will.

An. Wretched that I am! whither shall I fly?—where find help from gods *or men*?

Th In fear of what woe foreshown?

Oed That they must be smitten in this land

Th And how should bitterness come between them and me?

Oed Kind son of Aegeus to the gods alone comes never old age or death but all else is confounded by all mastering time Earth s strength decays and the strength of the body faith dies distrust is born and the same spirit is never steadfast among friends or betwixt city and city for be it soon or be it late men find sweet turn to bitter and then once more to love

And if now all is sunshine between Thebes and thee yet time in his untold course gives birth to days and nights untold wherein for a small cause they shall sunder with the spear that plighted con cord of to day when my slumbering and buried corpse cold in death shall one day drink their warm blood if Zeus is still Zeus and Phoebus the son of Zeus speaks true

But since I would not break silence touching *mysteries suffer me to cease where I began* only make thine own word good and never shalt thou say that in vain didst thou welcome Oedipus to dwell in this realm—unless the gods cheat my hope

Ch King from the first yon man hath shown the *mind to perform these promises or the like for our* land

Th Who then would reject the friendship of such an one?—to whom first the hearth of an ally is ever open by mutual right among us and then *he hath come as a suppliant to our gods fraught* with no light recompense for this land and for me In reverence for these claims I will never spurn his grace but will establish him as a citizen in the land And if it is the stranger s pleasure to abide here I *will charge you to guard him or if to come with me* be more pleasing —this choice or that Oedipus thou canst take thy will shall be mine

Oed O Zeus mayest thou be good unto such men!

Th What wouldst thou then? wouldst thou come to my house?

Oed Yea were it lawful but *this* is the place—

Th What art thou to do here? I will not thwart thee

Oed —where I shall vanquish those who cast me forth

Th Great were this promised boon from thy presence

Oed It shall be—if thy pledge is kept with me indeed

Th Fear not touching me never will I fail thee

Oed I will not bind thee with an oath as one un true

Th Well thou wouldst win nought more than by my word

Oed How wilt thou act then?

Th What may be thy fear?

Oed Men will come—

Th Nay these will look to that

Oed Beware lest if thou leave me—

Th Teach me not my part

Oed Fear constrains—

Th My heart feels not fear

Oed Thou knowest not the threats—

Th I know that none shall take thee hence in my despite Oft have threats blustered in men s wrath with threatenings loud and vain but when the mind is lord of himself once more the threats are gone And for yon men haply—aye though they have waxed bold to speak dread things of bringing thee back—the sundering waters will prove wide, and hard to sail Now I would have thee be of a good courage apart from any resolve of mine if indeed Phoebus hath sent thee on thy way still though I be not here my name I wot will shield thee from harm.

Exit THESEUS

Ch Stranger in this land of goodly steeds thou hast come to earth s fairest home even to our white Colonus where the nightingale a constant guest trills her clear note in the covert of green glades, *dwelling amid the wine-dark ivy and the god s in*violate bowers rich in berries and fruit unvisited by sun unvexed by wind of any storm where the reveller Dionysus ever walks the ground compan ion of the nymphs that nursed him

And fed of heavenly dew the narcissus blooms morn by morn with fair clusters crown of the Great Goddesses from of yore and the crocus blooms with golden beam Nor fail the sleepless founts whence *the waters of Cephisus wander but each day* with stainless tide he moveth over the plains of the land s swelling bosom for the giving of quick increase nor hath the Muses quire abhorred this place nor Aphrodite of the golden rein

And a thing there is such as I know not by fame on Asian ground or as ever born in the great Dorian isle of Pelops—a growth unconquered self renew ing a terror to the spears of the foemen a growth which mightily flourishes in this land—the gray leafed olive nurturer of children Youth shall not mar it by the ravage of his hand nor any who dwells with old age for the sleepless eye of the Morian Zeus beholds it and the gray eyed Athena

And another praise have I to tell for this the city our mother the gift of a great god a glory of the land most high the might of horses the might of young horses the might of the sea

For thou son of Cronus our lord Poseidon hast throned her in this pride since in these roads *first* thou didst show forth the curb that cures the rage of steeds And the shapely oar apt to men s hands hath a wondrous speed on the brine following the hundred footed Nereids

An O land that art praised above all lands now is it for thee to make those bright praises seen in deeds!

Oed What new thing hath chanced my daughter?

nor would she praise thee, f she learned that th u art robbi g me—yea spoiling the gods wh en b, force thou leadest off their hapless suppliants. Now were my foot upon thy soil never would I wrest or plunder ithout leen e from th rule of the land who he mi ht be—no thou h my claim were of all claims most just I hould know how an lien ought to li e mon citizens. But thou art harm ng a city that deser es it not e en thine own and the f ness of thy years brings thee an old a e bereft of wit.

I ha e said then and I say t once ain—let the maidens be brou ht hither w th al speed unless thou ouldst sojourn n this land b no free choi e and this I t ll thee from m soul, as w th my lips.

Ch. Seest thou th p ght O tranger? Thou art deemed t come f just race but thy deeds are found evil.

Cr. N t counting this city oid of manhood son of Aegeus, or of counsel—as thou sa est—ha e I wrought this deed but because I jud ed that its folk could e er be so enamoured of m k f lk as to foster them against m will And I knew that this peo l ould not rece e a parricid a pollu ted man, man th whom had been found the unholy bed f her son. Such the w sd m I knew that dw ls on the Mount f Ares in the land wh h suffers not such wande rs to dwell within this realm. In that faith, I sought to take this prize. Nor had I don so but that h w callin down b tter curses on me, and n my rac hen bei so wro ed, I deemed that I had wa rant for th s requital. For anger knows no old e till death come th dead lone feel no sma s

Therefore thou shalt ct as seems to thee good for thou h my cause is just th lack of aid makes me eak yet old thou h I am I ll idea our t meet deed th deed.

Oe. O sham less soul wh re thinkest thou falls th th taunt—on my a on thin own? Bloodshed—in est—misery—all thi th lips ha e h rled g inst m —all th that I ha borne woe mine b choice I mu n fo su I was th pleasure of the gods, wroth, hapl w th th ac f m f old Thereme for nd thou ould t find o sin to upbraid m w that, t quita b r of I w d en to s thus aga t m self and m n t m k n Tell me, now— f, b ot of oracl om d ne doom was com on m s tha h should d by a son hand, how couldst thou ju tl ep oa h m her with, who as then unborn whom o sir had t begotten, mo t omb con ei ed? And f, hen born to woe—as I wa born—I m t m s n st f and slew him, ll gnora t what I wa doin and t whom—how ould t thou justl blam th unknown n deed

And m mother—wret h ha t thou no shame n forc n m to speak f her pt als, when he wa th t ed th such I ll now tell—for d I ld not be si n h n th u ha t gon so far in impious speech. Yea sh w m m r th —oh misery!—my mother—I knew t no or she—and for her shame bare children to the son whom he had borne But on thing at least I know that th w ll consents th is to re le her and me but not of my free w ll did I wed her and not of free will do I speak now

Na not in this marria e shall I be called gu lty nor in that lay n of m sire wh ch thou e er urgest agai t me w th b tter revilin . Answer me but on th n that I ask thee. If here and now one should come up and seek to slay thee—thee the ri hteous—would t thou ask if the murde er was thy father or wouldst thou recko w th h m strai ht way? I think as thou l est thy lif thou would t requite the culprit nor look around thee for thy warrant. But such the pl ht nto which I came led b god and ir this, could m sire come back to life methinks he would not ga nsay m e

Yet th u—for thou a t not a just man but on who hold all thin meet to utte known no bar ner betwixt speech and silence—th u taunt test me n such wise befor o men And thou f ndest it timely to flatter the renowned Theseus, and Athens, sayi g how ll h r stat hath bee ordered yet whil m t uch la e praise thou f rg ttest this—that if any land knows how to worship th god w th d e r tes th s land e cels therein whence thou hast planned to teal me the suppl ant the old man and didst seek to seize me nd ha t lready carried off m daught r Wher fore I now call on yo godd sses, I supplicate them I djure them with prayers, to bring me help and to fi ht in my cause that thou ma est learn well b what manner of men this realm is gua ded

Ch. The stran e i a good ma O ki g his fate h th been accurst but tis worth of our succour

Th. Enough f word the doers of the deed are in flight whil we th suff rers, stand s ll

Cr. What th n would t thou ha e a h lpless man to do?

Th. Show th wa n their track—while I esco t thee—that f in these region thou ha t the mai d ens f r quest thou th self mayest d sco er th m to me b t f th m n ar fleein with the spo l in their gra p we may spa e ou trouble the chase is fo others, from whom th y will never escape out of th land t tha k their gods.

Com —f rward! Th poiler hath been spoiled I t ll th e—Fat hath t ken the hu ter i the to ls g ns g t b wro gful art are soo lost A d thou shalt ha no n th a m I well wot I that not w thout acc mpl e o resourc ha t thou gone t uch l th o of ol ce the dar g mood wh h hath t sp ed thee here no—the e was som on n wh m thou wast tru ti g when thou didst ess th ese deed And to th s I must look not make this c ty eak than one man Dost thou take my drift? Or seem these words s ain seemed the warnings whe th deed was till a plannin ?

Cr. Sa hat thou wilt wh le thou art here—I will t ca l but at home I too w ll know how to act

Th. F th present threaten, b t go forward Do thou Oed pus, stay here in peace, I pray thee—with

Ch (*threateningly to* CREON) What wouldst thou stranger?

Cr I will not touch yon man but her who is mine

Oed O elders of the land!

Ch Stranger—thy deed is not just

Cr Tis just

Ch How just?

Cr I take mine own

(*He lays his hand on* ANTIGONE)

Oed Hear O Athens!

Ch What wouldst thou stranger? Release her! Thy strength and ours will soon be proved

(*They approach him with threatening gestures*)

Cr Stand back!

Ch Not from thee while this is thy purpose

Cr Nay twill be war with Thebes for thee if thou harm me

Oed Said I not so?

Ch Unhand the maid at once!

Cr Command not where thou art not master

Ch Leave hold I tell thee!

Cr (*to one of his guards who at a signal seizes* ANTIGONE) And I tell thee—begone!

Ch To the rescue men of Colonus—to the rescue! Athens—yea Athens—is outraged with the strong hand! Hither hither to our help!

An They drag me hence—ah me!—friends friends!

Oed Where art thou my child? (*blindly seeking for her*)

An I am taken by force—

Oed Thy hands my child!—

An Nay I am helpless

Cr (*to his guards*) Away with you!

Oed Ah me ah me!

Exeunt guards with ANTIGONE

Cr So *those* two crutches shall never more prop thy steps But since tis thy will to worst thy country and thy friends—whose mandate though a prince I here discharge—then be that victory thine For hereafter I wot thou wilt come to know all this—that now as in time past thou hast done thyself no good when in despite of friends thou hast indulged anger which is ever thy bane

(*He turns to follow his guards*)

Ch Hold stranger!

Cr Hands off I say!

Ch I will not let thee go unless thou give back the maidens

Cr Then wilt thou soon give Thebes a still dearer prize I will seize more than those two girls

Ch What—whither wilt thou turn?

Cr Yon man shall be my captive

Ch A valiant threat!

Cr Twill forthwith be a deed

Ch Aye unless the ruler of this realm hinder thee

Oed Shameless voice! Wilt thou indeed touch me?

Cr Be silent!

Oed Nay may the powers of this place suffer me to utter yet this curse! Wretch who when these eyes were dark hast reft from me by force the helpless one who was mine eyesight! Therefore to thee and to thy race may the Sun god the god who sees all things yet grant an old age such as mine!

Cr See ye this people of the land?

Oed They see both me and thee they know that my wrongs are deeds and my revenge—but breath.

Cr I will not curb my wrath—nay alone though I am and slow with age I ll take yon man by force

(*He approaches* OEDIPUS *as if to seize him*)

Oed Woe is me!

Ch Tis a bold spirit that thou hast brought with thee stranger if thou thinkest to achieve this.

Cr I do

Ch Then will I deem Athens a city no more

Cr In a just cause the weak vanquishes the strong

Oed Hear ye his words?

Ch Yea words which he shall not turn to deeds, Zeus knows!

Cr Zeus haply knows—thou dost not.

Ch Insolence!

Cr Insolence which thou must bear

Ch What ho people rulers of the land ho hither with all speed hither! These men are on their way to cross our borders!

Enter THESEUS

Th What means this shout? What is the trouble? What fear can have moved you to stay my sacrifice at the altar unto the sea god the lord of your Colonus? Speak that I may know all since therefore have I sped hither with more than easeful speed of foot

Oed Ah friend—I know thy voice—yon man but now hath done me foul wrong

Th What is that wrong? And who hath wrought it? Speak!

Oed Creon whom thou seest there hath torn away from me my two children—mine all

Th What dost thou tell me?

Oed Thou hast heard my wrong

Th (*to his attendants*) Haste one of you to the altars yonder—constrain the folk to leave the sacrifice and to speed—footmen horsemen all with slack rein to the region where the two highways meet lest the maidens pass and I become a mockery to this stranger as one spoiled by force Away I tell thee—quick! (*Turning toward* CREON) As for yon man—if my wrath went as far as he deserves—I would not have suffered him to go scatheless from my hand But now such law as he himself hath brought and no other shall be the rule for his correction —(*Addressing* CREON) Thou shalt not quit this land until thou bring those maidens and produce them in my sight for thy deed is a disgrace to me and to thine own race and to thy country Thou hast come unto a city that observes justice and sanctions nothing without law —yet thou hast put her lawful powers aside thou hast made this rude inroad thou art taking captives at thy pleasure and snatching prizes by violence as in the belief that my city was void of men or manned by slaves and I a thing of nought

Yet tis not by Theban training that thou art base Thebes is not wont to rear unrighteous sons

Th. He asks, they say, no more than that he may confer with thee, and return unharmed from his journey hither.

Oed. Who can he be who thus implores the god?

Th. Look if ye have an kinsman at Argos, who might crave this boon of thee.

Oed. O friend! Say no word more!

Th. What ails thee?

Oed. Ask it not of me—

Th. Ask what?—Speak!

Oed. By those words I know who is the suppliant.

Th. And who can he be, against whom I should have a grief?

Oed. My son, O king,—the hated son whose words would vex me, ear as the words of no man beside.

Th. What? Canst thou not listen, without doing what thou wouldst not? Why should it pain thee to hear him?

Oed. Most hateful, king, hath that voice become to his sire: lay me not under constraint to yield in this.

Th. But think whether his suppliant state constrains thee: what if thou hast a duty of respect for the god?

An. Father, hearken to me, though I be young who counsel. Allow the king to gratify his own heart, and to gratify the god as he wishes; and for thy daughter's sake allow our brother to come. For he will not pluck thee perforce from thy resolve—never fear—by such words as shall not be spoken for thy good. But to hear him speak—what harm can be in that? Ill-devised deeds, thou knowest, are betrayed by speech. Thou art his sire; so that, even if he were to wrong thee with the most impious of foul wrongs, my father, it is not lawful for thee to wrong him again.

Oh, let him come: other men also have evil offspring, and are swift to wrath; but they hear advice, and are charmed from their mood by the gentle spells of friends.

Look thou to the past, not to the present—think on all *that thou hast borne through* sire and mother; and if thou considerest those things, well I wot thou wilt discern how evil is the end that waits on evil wrath; not slight are the reasons to think thereon, bereft, as thou art, of the sight that returns no more.

Ah, yield to us! It is not seemly for just suitors to sue long; it is not seemly that a man should receive good, and thereafter lack the mind to requite it.

Oed. My child, 'tis sore for me, this pleasure that ye win from me by your pleading; but be it as ye will. Only, if that man is to come hither,—friend, let no one ever become master of my life!

Th. I need not to hear such words more than once, old man: I would not boast; but be sure that thy life is safe, while any god saves mine.

Exit THESEUS, to the right of the spectators.

Chorus

Whoso craves the ampler length of life, not content to desire a modest span, him will I judge with no uncertain voice: he cleaves to folly.

For the long days lay up full many things nearer unto grief than joy; but as for thy delights, their place shall know them no more, when a man's life hath lapsed beyond the fitting term; and the Deliverer comes at the last to all alike—when the doom of Hades is suddenly revealed, without marriage-song, or lyre, or dance—even Death at the last.

Not to be born is, past all prizing, best; but, when a man hath seen the light, this is next best by far, that with all speed he should go thither whence he hath come.

For when he hath seen youth go by, with its light follies, what troublous affliction is strange to his lot, what suffering is not therein?—envy, factions, strife, battles and slaughters; and, last of all, age claims him for her own—age, dispraised, infirm, unsociable, unfriended, with whom all woe of woe abides.

In such years is yon hapless one, not I alone: and as some cape that fronts the North is lashed on every side by the waves of winter, so he also is fiercely lashed evermore by the dread troubles that break on him like billows, some from the setting of the sun, some from the rising, some in the region of the noon-tide beam, some from the gloom-wrapped hills of the North.

An. Lo, yonder, methinks, I see the stranger coming hither—yea, without attendants, my father—the tears streaming from his eyes.

Oed. Who is he?

An. The same who was in our thoughts from the first: Polyneices hath come to us.

Enter POLYNEICES, on the spectators' left.

Polyneices. Ah me, what shall I do? Whether shall I weep first for mine own sorrows, sisters, or for mine aged sire's, as I see them yonder? Whom I have found in a strange land, an exile here with you twain, clad in such raiment, whereof the foul squalor hath dwelt with that aged form so long, a very blight upon his flesh—while above the sightless eyes the unkempt hair flutters in the breeze; and matching with these things, meseems, is the food that he carries, hapless one, 'gainst hunger's pinch.

Wretch that I am! I learn all this too late: and I bear witness that I am proved the vilest of men in all that touches care for thee: from mine own lips hear what I am. But, *seeing that Zeus himself,* in all that he doeth, hath Mercy for the sharer of his throne, may she come to thy side also, my father; for the faults can be healed, but can never more be made worse.

(*A pause.*)

Why art thou silent? Speak, father—turn not away *from me*. Hast thou not even an answer for me? Wilt thou dismiss me in mute scorn, without telling wherefore thou art wroth?

O ye, his daughters, sisters mine, strive ye at least to move our sire's implacable, inexorable silence, that he send me not away dishonoured—who *am the* suppliant of the god—in such wise as this, with no word of response.

An. Tell him thyself, unhappy one, what thou hast come to seek. As words flow, perchance they

my pledge that unless I die before I will not cease till I put thee in possession of thy children

Oed Heaven reward thee Theseus for thy noble ness and thy loyal care in my behalf!

Exeunt THESEUS *and attendants with* CREON *on spectators left*

Chorus

Oh to be where the foeman turned to bay will soon join in the brazen clangour of battle haply by the shores loved of Apollo haply by that torch lit strand where the Great Goddesses cherish dread rites for mortals on whose lips the ministrant Eumolpi dae have laid the precious seal of silence where me thinks the war waking Theseus and the captives twain the sister maids will soon meet within our borders amid a war cry of men strong to save!

Or perchance they will soon draw nigh to the pas tures on the west of Oea s snowy rock borne on horses in their flight or in chariots racing at speed

Creon will be worsted! Terrible are the warriors of Colonus and the followers of Theseus are terrible in their might Yea the steel of every bridle flashes —with slack bridle rein all the knighthood rides apace that worships our Queen of Chivalry Athena and the earth girdling Sea god the son of Rhea s love

Is the battle now or yet to be? For somehow my soul woos me to the hope that soon I shall be face to face with the maidens thus sorely tried thus sorely visited by the hand of a kinsman

To day to day Zeus will work some great thing I have presage of victory in the strife O to be a dove with swift strength as of the storm that I might reach an airy cloud with gaze lifted above the fray!

Hear all ruling lord of heaven all seeing Zeus! Enable the guardians of this land in might trium phant to achieve the capture that gives the prize to their hands! So grant thy daughter also our dread Lady Pallas Athena! And Apollo the hunter and his sister who follows the dappled swift footed deer—fain am I that they should come a twofold strength to this land and to her people

Ah wanderer friend thou wilt not have to tax thy watcher with false augury—for yonder I see the maidens drawing near with an escort

Oed Where—where? How? What sayest thou?

Enter ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE *with* THESEUS *and his attendants on the spectators left*

An O father father that some god would suffer thine eyes to see this noble man who hath brought us here to thee!

Oed My child!—ye are here indeed?

An Yea for these strong arms have saved us—Theseus, and his trusty followers

Oed Come ye hither my child let me embrace you—restored beyond all hope!

An Thy wish shall be granted—we crave what we bestow

Oed Where then where are ye?

An Here approaching thee together

Oed My darlings!

An A father loves his own

Oed Props of mine age!

An And sharers of thy sorrow

Oed I hold my dear ones and now should I die I were not wholly wretched since ye have come to me Press close to me on either side children cleave to your sire and repose from this late roaming so forlorn so grievous! And tell me what hath passed as shortly as ye may brief speech sufficeth for young maidens

An Here is our deliverer from him thou shouldst hear the story father since his is the deed so shall my part be brief

Oed Sir marvel not if with such yearning I pro long my words unto my children found again be yond my hope For well I wot that this joy in re spect of them hath come to me from thee and thee alone thou hast rescued them and no man beside And may the gods deal with thee after my wish with thee and with this land for among you above all human kind have I found the fear of heaven and the spirit of fairness and the lips that lie not I know these things which with these words I re quite for what I have I have through thee and no man else

Stretch forth thy right hand O king I pray thee that I may touch it and if tis lawful kiss thy cheek But what am I saying? Unhappy as I have become how could I wish thee to touch one with whom all stain of sin hath made its dwelling? No, not I—nor allow thee, if thou wouldst They alone can share this burden to whom it hath come home. Receive my greeting where thou standest and in the future still give me thy loyal care as thou hast given it to this hour

Th No marvel is it to me if thou hast shown some mind to large discourse for joy in these thy children and if thy first care hath been for their words rather than for me indeed there is nought to vex me in that Not in words so much as deeds would I make the lustre of my life Thou hast the proof I have failed in nothing of my sworn faith to thee old man here am I with the maidens living—yea scatheless of those threats And how the fight was won what need that I should idly boast when thou wilt learn it from these maidens in converse?

But there is a matter that hath newly chanced to me as I came hither lend me thy counsel thereon for small though it be tis food for wonder and mortal man should deem nothing beneath his care

Oed What is it son of Aegeus? Tell me I myself know nought of that whereof thou askest

Th A man they say—not thy countryman yet thy kinsman—hath somehow cast himself a suppli ant at our altar of Poseidon where I was sacrificing when I first set out hither

Oed Of what land is he? What craves he by the supplication?

Th I know one thing only they say he asks brief speech with thee which shall not irk thee much

Oed On what theme? That suppliant posture is not trivial

be ‑end for you, ch. as ye fear the gods, do not for your part, dishonou me—nay give m burial and due funeral n es. And so the praise which ye now w from under man, for your service shall be in creased b another pra se not less, by reason of the ser ice wro t for me

An. Polyneices, I entreat thee hear me in one th t

Po. What is it, dearest Antigone Speak!

An. Turn thy host back to Argos—a e, w th all speed—and destro not thyself and Thebes.

Po. Na it cannot be f r how again could I lead the same host when onc I had flinched?

An. B t wh my brother should thine a ger rise a ? What gain is promised thee in dest o g thy na ve city?

P. T shame to be n exi nd, eldest born as I am, t be thus mocked on my brother s part.

An. Sees thou, th n, to what sure ful lment thou art bear his prophecies, wh bodes mutual day unto b ou twain?

P. A e, for he wishes t but I mu t not eld

An. Ah me unhap ! But who will dare to follow thee h what p oph ci s yon man hath uttered

P. I will not e en report ill tidi s t a good leader part to tell th better news, nd not th orse

An. Brother! Thy resol th n, is thus fi ed?

P. Yea— nd deta m not For m t ow shall be t tread on path, w t ll-omen and orien from t m s a d f om h Furi s b t for ou twain, ma Zeus ma ou path bri ht f y do m shes when I am dead— or y my life e can d t can no mor (He gen . disen e s *arms from her embrace*) Now fare e m and f ewell fo evermore s . d behold me li ing

An. Woe e

P. Mourn not f r m

An. And who would not bewail thee h he hast us rushing to d h f reseen

P. If t b I mus d.

An. N no—hear m pleadin

Po. Plead not amiss.

An. Then woe s me indeed if I must lose thee!

P. N that res w th Fortun —that nd or not For ou twa n, t least I pra t e go ds ha t meet with ill t e n all men es are u orth t suffer

Ex *ter* *left*

Ch. Behold, w l ha newl com un ou l ea ir from h h es tran —ld tra ht w th bea m n ss, per an e F e find n t frail F t not m t sa that decree of Heaven st er u t ful w t bf ul l those decrees n T— h ws sor fortunes, nd on the morrow u th m g n t honour Hark that sound th s Zeus d f nd us!

(*Th* *nder* *heard*)

Oed. My hild en, m ch ld en If th e be any man t send ould that some one would f tch hither the peerless Theseus

An. And what father is the aim of thy summons?

Oed. This winged thunder of Zeus will lead me anon to Hades nay send and tarry not.

(*A second peal is heard*)

Ch. Hark! With loud r noise it crashes down un utterabl hurled by Zeus! The hair of my head stands up for fear my soul s sore dismayed for again the l ht n flashes in the k y Oh, to what event will it g e birth I am afraid for never in vain doth t rush forth, or without grave ssue O thou dread sk ! O Zeus!

Oed. Dau hters, h s destined end hath come upon your sire he can turn h face from t no more

An. How knowest thou? What sign hath told thee this?

Oed. I know it well. But l t some one go, I pray you, with all speed and brin h ther th lord of this realm.

(*A other peal*)

Ch. H ! Listen! Once a n that piercin thunder once a around us! Be merciful O thou god be merciful, if tho art b n au ht of gloom for th land our mother! Gracious may I find thee nor be c use I have looked on a man accurst ha e some meed not of bless for my portion! O Zeus our lord to thee I cry!

Oed. Is th man near W l he find me still ali e child en nd ma te of my mind?

An. And what i th pledge wh ch thou wouldst ha fi ed i thy m nd

Oed. I retu n for hi ben fits, I would dul give him the requit I p omised wh n I rece ved them.

Ch. What ho, my son h t er com hithe ! Or if in th ! lad u most recess, for th honour of the sea god Poseidon th u rt hall wing hi ltar w th sa the — om e th e ! Worth art thou n the tra s ht worthy are th t a d th folk that h should rend r ju t recompense f bene fits. Hast com q k! O k !

Enter *s on the spectators righ*

Th. Wher fo e o more rises f rth a summons from ou d—from m people as clea ly as from our guest Can a thund bolt f om *Zeus be the* cause rushi hail n t fi e onset? All for bod nes ma find pl e wh n th od send *such a* storm

Oed. Ki welcom s th presen e and it som od that hath ma f r thee the good fortun e this com

Th. And what ew t ha h now befall n, son of Laius

Oed. M li ha to th scal and I fain would die guiltless f k d fa th to thee and t thi c t in respect of m p ed es.

Th. A d what sign of th fa bod thee n sus- pense

Oe. Th ods, thei own heralds, bring me the tidi s w th o fail n th s s appoi ted of old

Th. What sa est thou r the si n f these thi ngs, old man

Oed. The th nder peal on peal, th li htni n flash on flash, hurled from the unconqu red hand.

touch to joy perchance they glow with anger or with tenderness and so they somehow give a voice to the dumb

Po Then will I speak boldly—for thou dost admonish me well—first claiming the help of the god himself from whose altar the king of this land raised me that I might come hither with warranty to speak and hear and go my way unharmed And I will crave strangers that these pledges be kept with me by you and by my sisters here and by my sire But now I would fain tell thee father why I came

I have been driven an exile from my fatherland because as eldest born I claimed to sit in thy sovereign seat Wherefore Eteocles though the younger thrust me from the land when he had neither worsted me in argument nor come to trial of might and deed—no but won the city over And of this I deem it most likely that the curse on thy house is the cause then from soothsayers also I so hear For when I came to Dorian Argos I took the daughter of Adrastus to wife and I bound to me by oath all of the Apian land who are foremost in renown of war that with them I might levy the sevenfold host of spearmen against Thebes and die in my just cause or cast the doers of this wrong from the realm

Well and wherefore have I come hither now? With suppliant prayers my father unto thee—mine own and the prayers of mine allies who now with seven hosts behind their seven spears have set their leaguer round the plain of Thebes of whom is swift speared Amphiaraus matchless warrior matchless augur then the son of Oeneus Aetolian Tydeus Eteoclus third of Argive birth the fourth Hippomedon sent by Talaos his sire while Capaneus the fifth vaunts that he will burn Thebes with fire unto the ground and sixth Arcadian Parthenopaeus rushes to the war named from that virgin of other days whose marriage in after time gave him birth trusty son of Atalanta Last I thy son—or if not thine but offspring of an evil fate yet thine at least in name—lead the fearless host of Argos unto Thebes

And we by these thy children and by thy life my father implore thee all praying thee to remit thy stern wrath against me as I go forth to chastise my brother who hath thrust me out and robbed me of my fatherland For if aught of truth is told by oracles they said that victory should be with those whom thou shouldst join

Then by our fountains and by the gods of our race I ask thee to hearken and to yield a beggar and an exile am I an exile thou by court to others we have a home both thou and I sharers of one doom while he king in the house—woe is me!—mocks in his pride at thee and me alike But if thou assist my purpose small toil or time and I will scatter his strength to the winds and so will I bring thee and stablish thee in thine own house and stablish myself when I have cast him out by force Be thy will with me and that boast may be mine without thee I cannot even return alive

Ch For his sake who hath sent him Oedipus speak as seems thee good ere thou send the man away

Oed Nay then my friends guardians of this land were not Theseus he who had sent him hither to me desiring that he should have my response never should he have heard this voice But now he shall be graced with it ere he go—yea and hear from me such words as shall never gladden his life villain who when thou hadst the sceptre and the throne which now thy brother hath in Thebes dravest me thine own father into exile and madest me citiless, and madest me to wear this garb which now thou weepest to behold when thou hast come unto the same stress of misery as I The time for tears is past no I must bear this burden while I live ever thinking of thee as of a murderer for tis thou that hast brought my days to this anguish tis thou that hast thrust me out to thee I owe it that I wander begging my daily bread from strangers And had these daughters not been born to be my comfort verily I had been dead for aught of help from thee Now these girls preserve me these my nurses these who are men not women in true service but ye are aliens and no sons of mine

Therefore the eyes of Fate look upon thee—not yet as they will look anon if indeed those hosts are moving against Thebes Never canst thou overthrow that city no first shalt thou fall stained with bloodshed and thy brother likewise Such the curses that my soul sent forth before against you twain and such do I now invoke to fight for me that ye may deem it meet to revere parents nor scorn your father utterly because he is sightless who begat such sons for these maidens did not thus So my curses have control of thy supplication and thy throne if indeed Justice revealed from of old sits with Zeus in the might of the eternal laws

And thou—begone abhorred of me and unfathered!—begone thou vilest of the vile and with thee take these my curses which I call down on thee—never to vanquish the land of thy race no nor ever return to hill girt Argos but by a kindred hand to die and slay him by whom thou hast been driven out Such is my prayer and I call the paternal darkness of dread Tartarus to take thee unto another home—I call the spirits of this place—I call the Destroying God who hath set that dreadful hatred in you twain Go with these words in thine ears—go and publish it to the Cadmeans all yea and to thine own staunch allies that Oedipus hath divided such honours to his sons

Ch Polyneices in thy past goings I take no joy and now go thy way with speed

Po Alas for my journey and my baffled hope alas for my comrades! What an end was that march to have whereon we sallied forth from Argos woe is me!—aye such an end that I may not even utter it to any of my companions or turn them back but must go in silence to meet this doom

Ah ye his daughters and my sisters—since ye hear these hard prayers of your sire—if this father's curses be fulfilled and some way of return to Thebes

be found for you, oh as ye fear the gods, do not for your part, dishonour me—nay gi e me burial and due funeral rites. And so the pra se wh h ye now win from onder man for you service shall be increased b anoth r praise not less, by reason of the care yo ht for me

An. Pol nei es, I ent eat thee Lear me in one th !

P What is it dearest Anti one? Speak!

An. Turn thy host back to Argos—ave w tl all speed—and destroy not thyself and Thebes

Po Na it cann t be for how ain could I lead th sam host when once I had blenched?

A B t h my b th r should thine a ger r se again? What gain is promised thee in destroyin thy nat e city?

P 'Tis shame to be an exile and eldest born as I am t be thus mocked on my broth er part

A Seest thou th n to what sur fulfilment thou art brin his prophec es, wh bodes mutual slay s for you twain?

P A e, fo he wishes it b t I must not y eld

An. Ah me unhapp ! But who will d re to f llow thee hear what p oph cy s y n m n hath utt red?

Po I ill ot en repo t ill tidi gs us good leader's part t tell the bett news, and not the orse

A Br ther! Thy resol then i thus fixed

Po Yea— nd d tain m not Fo mine t ow sh ll be t t ead path th d doom nd om n from th m si and f m his F es b t fo u t ua may Zeu make u path b i ht f e do m w hes h n I m dead s c m Lle ve can do th m no mo (*H ger h d sen e himself f om their embr ce*) Now lease m and fa ew ll f r ne ermo shall beh ld m li ing

An. Woe is m !

P Mou n ot for me.

A And h would n t bew il thee b other h th s rt hurry to death f eseen?

P If ts fa I must die

A N na —hea my plead !

Po I lead t miss.

A The woe m und ed f I must lose thee!

P N hat est ith F t n —that end or ano h r F y ou t a t leat I pray th god tha e meet th ill f n all m n es ye ar u orth suff

Exit o nec or left

Ch. B h d ew ills ha ewl come n ou hea g from th heless tran — ll fra ht w th hea oom nless, pe ha e F t find it goal F not mi to sa that a decree f Heaven is a t f l aye w t hf l f those decrees is T m th ow g som f tu es, a d on the mor hftu th m to ho our Ha k that sound th sk Zeu d fend us!

(*Th ner h ard*)

Oed M h ld e m ch ldr If he be any man t send would that soon on would fetch hither th peer ess Theseus!

A And what father is the aim of thy summons?

Oed Th s winged thunder of Zeus will lead me anon to Hades nay send and tarry not

(*A stro d pe l is heard*)

Ch. Ha k! With louder noi e it cra hes down un utterabl hu led b Zeus! Th ha r f my head stands up for fear my soul is sore d smayed for again the li htnin flashes in the sk Oh to what e ent will it g v birth? I am afraid fo ne er in vain doth it ru h f rth or without gra e issue O th u dread sky! O Zeus!

Oed Dau hters, h dest ned end hath come upon your sire he can turn h s fac from it no more

A How kno est th ou? What sign hath told thee this?

O d I know t w ll. But let some one go, I pray you, w th all peed and brin hither the lord of this realm.

(*A ther pea*)

Ch Ha! Listen! Onc again that pierc ng thunder once is a ound us! Be m ciful O thou god be merciful if thou art brin n au ht f gloom for the land ou mother! Gracious may I find thee n r because I hav looked on ma accurst have some meed not f bless ng for my port on! O Zeus our lord, to thee I cry!

Oed I the man near Will he find me st ll l ve childr n and ma ter f m m nd

A And what i th pledge wh ch thou would t hav f xed n th m nd?

Oed In r turn f r h ben fits, I would duly g ve him the requital prom sed wh n I recei ed them

Ch What h m son hithe come hith e! Or if the lade nmost recess f the ho u of the sea od Pose d n thou rt h ll in h altar with sac h e m th nc ! Worthy art thou n the stran r s si ht orthy a e th it and thy folk that h should ende a ju t recompense f r benefits. Hast com q ckl O k !

Er er th se s, n the sreet at s right

Th Wh rei e nc mor tunes f rth a summons from o all—f m m people a clearl s from our guest Ca thund rbolt fro n Zeus be the cause rushin ha l it fi rce onset? All forebod ings ma find plac wh th god sends such to m

Oed K wel m s th presen e nd t s some od that hath mad fo thee the good fort of thi omi g

Th A d what new th g hath now bef llen son of La

O d My li ht ha in th sc l d I fain w uld d guiltles f b d fa th to thee nd to this city in respect of my pled es.

Th And what s of th y fat hold thee in sus pe se

O d Th gods thei w heralds, b g me the tid ngs th no fa l r he signs appointed f old

Th What sayest thou r the si of these thi gs, ld man

Oed Th thunder peal on peal the li htn ng, flash on flash hurled from the unconq ed hand.

Th Thou winnest my belief for in much I find thee a prophet whose voice is not false then speak what must be done

Oed Son of Aegeus I will unfold that which shall be a treasure for this thy city such as age can never mar Anon unaided and with no hand to guide me I will show the way to the place where I must die But that place reveal thou never unto mortal man—tell not where it is hidden nor in what region it lies that so it may ever make for thee a defence better than many shields better than the succouring spear of neighbours

But for mysteries which speech may not profane thou shalt mark them for thyself when thou comest to that place alone since neither to any of this people can I utter them nor to mine own children dear though they are No guard them thou alone and when thou art coming to the end of life disclose them to thy heir alone let him teach his heir and so thenceforth

And thus shalt thou hold this city unscathed from the side of the Dragon s brood full many States lightly enter on offence e en though their neighbour lives aright For the gods are slow though they are sure in visitation when men scorn godliness and turn to frenzy Not such be thy fate son of Aegeus Nay thou knowest such things without my precepts

But to that place—for the divine summons urges me—let us now set forth and hesitate no more (*As if suddenly inspired he moves with slow but firm steps towards the left of the scene beckoning the others onward*) My children follow me—thus—for I now have in strange wise been made your guide as ye were your sire s On—touch me not—nay suffer me unaided to find out that sacred tomb where tis my portion to be buried in this land

This way—hither this way!—for this way doth Guiding Hermes lead me and the goddess of the dead!

O light—no light to me—mine once thou wast I ween but now my body feels thee for the last time! For now go I to hide the close of my life with Hades Truest of friends! blessed be thou and this land and thy lieges and when your days are blest think on me the dead for your welfare evermore

He passes from the stage on the spectators left followed by his daughters THESEUS *and attendants*

Ch If with prayer I may adore the Unseen Goddess and thee lord of the children of night O hear me Aidoneus Aidoneus! Not in pain not by a doom that wakes sore lament may the stranger pass to the fields of the dead below the all enshrouding and to the Stygian house Many were the sorrows that came to him without cause but in requital a just god will lift him up

Goddesses Infernal! And thou dread form of the unconquered hound thou who hast thy lair in those gates of many guests thou untameable Watcher of Hell gnarling from the cavern s jaws as rumour from the beginning tells of thee!

Hear me O Death son of Earth and Tartarus! May that Watcher leave a clear path for the stranger on his way to the nether fields of the dead! To thee I call giver of the eternal sleep

Enter a MESSENGER *from the left*

Messenger Countrymen my tidings might most shortly be summed thus Oedipus is gone But the story of the hap may not be told in brief words as the deeds yonder were not briefly done

Ch He is gone hapless one?

Me Be sure that he hath passed from life

Ch Ah how? by a god sent doom and painless?

Me There thou touchest on what is indeed worthy of wonder How he moved hence thou thyself must know since thou wast here—with no friend to show the way but guide himself unto us all

Now when he had come to the sheer Threshold bound by brazen steps to earth s deep roots he paused in one of many branching paths near the basin in the rock where the inviolate covenant of Theseus and Peirithous hath its memorial He stood midway between that basin and the Thorician stone—the hollow pear tree and the marble tomb then sate him down and loosed his sordid raiment

And then he called his daughters and bade them fetch water from some fount that he should wash and make a drink offering And they went to the hill which was in view Demeter s hill who guards the tender plants and in short space brought that which their father had enjoined then they ministered to him with washing and dressed him as use ordains

But when he had content of doing all and no part of his desire was now unheeded then was thunder from the Zeus of the Shades and the maidens shuddered as they heard they fell at their father s knees and wept nor ceased from beating the breast and wailing very sore

And when he heard their sudden bitter cry he put his arms around them and said My children this day ends your father s life For now all hath perished that was mine and no more shall ye bear the burden of tending me no light one well I know my children yet one little word makes all those toils as nought *love* had ye from me as from none beside and now ye shall have me with you no more through all your days to come

On such wise close clinging to each other sire and daughters sobbed and wept But when they had made an end of wailing and the sound went up no more there was a stillness and suddenly a voice of one who cried aloud to him so that the hair of all stood up on their heads for sudden fear and they were afraid For the god called him with many callings and manifold *Oedipus Oedipus why delay we to go? Thou tarriest too long*

But when he perceived that he was called of the god he craved that the king Theseus should draw near and when he came near said O my friend give I pray thee the solemn pledge of thy right hand to my children and ye daughters to him and promise thou never to forsake them of thy free

will but to do all things for their good as thy friend ship and the time may prompt And he like a man of noble part without making lament sware to keep that promise to his friend

But when Theseus had so promised straightway Oedipus felt for his children with blind hands and said O my children ye must be nobly brave of heart, and depart from this place nor ask to behold unlawful sights or to hear such speech as may not be heard. Nay go with all haste only let Theseus be present, as is his right a witness of those things which are to be.

So spake he and we all heard and with stream g tears and with lamentation we followed the maidens away But when we had gone apart after no long time we looked back, and Oedipus we saw no her any more but the king alone, holding his hand before his face to screen his eyes as if some dread sight had been seen and such as none might endure to behold And then after a short space we saw him salute the earth and the home of the gods bo both at once in one prayer

But by what doom Oedipus perished no man can tell, save Theseus alone. No fiery thunderbolt of the god removed him nor that hour nor any rising of storm from the sea but either a messenger from the gods, or the world of the dead the nether adamant n en for him n lo with ut pain for the passing of the man was not with lament nor in sickness and suffering but above mortal wonderful And if to any I seem to speak folly I would not woo their belief, who count me foolish

Ch And where are the maidens, and their escort?

M Not far hence for the sounds of mourning tell plainly that they approach

ANTIGONE and ISMENE enter

A Woe woe! Now and ed t for us, unhappy sisters, in all fulness to bewail the curse of the blood that is ours from our sire! For him while he lived we bore that long pain without pause and at the last sight and loss that baffle thought are our to tell

Ch And how is it with you?

A We can but conjecture, friends.

Ch H is g n ?

An Even thou mightest wish yea surely when death met him not in war or on the deep but he as snatched to the viewless fields by some swift strange doom Ah me! and a night as of death hath come on the eyes of us twain for how shall we find our bitter livelihood roaming to some far land or on the waves of the sea?

I I know not Oh that deadly Hades would join me in death unto mine aged sire! Woe is me! I cannot live the life that must be mine

Ch Best of daughters sisters twain Heaven's doom must be borne be no more fired with too much grief ye have so fared that ye should not repine

An Ah, so care past can seem lost joy! For that which was no way sweet had sweetness, while that I held him in mine embrace Ah father dear ah thou who hast put on the darkness of the under world for ever not even there shalt thou ever lack our love—her love and mine

Ch He hath fared—

An He hath fared as he would.

Ch In what wise?

An On foreign ground the ground of his choice he hath died in the shadow of the grave he hath his bed for ever and he hath left mourning behind him not barren of tears For with these streaming eyes father I bewail thee nor know I ah me how to quell my sorrow for thee my sorrow that is so great Ah me! twas thy wish to die in a strange land but now thou hast died without gifts at my hand

Is Woe is me! What new fate think st thou awaits thee and me my sister thus orphaned of our sire?

Ch Nay since he hath found a blessed end my children cease from this lament no mortal is hard for evil fortune to capture

A Sister let us hasten back.

Is Unto what deed?

An A longing fills my soul

Is Whereof?

An To see the dark home—

Is Of whom?

A Ah me! of our sire.

Is And how can this thing be lawful? Hast thou no understanding?

An Why this reproof?

Is And knowest thou not this also—

A What wouldst thou tell me more?

Is That he was perishing without tomb apart from all?

An Lead me thither and then slay me also

Is Ah me unhappy! Friendless and helpless, where am I now to live my hapless life?

Ch My children fear not

A But whither am I to flee?

Ch Already a refuge hath been found—

An How meanest thou?

Ch —for your fortunes, that no harm should touch them

A I know it well.

Ch What then is thy thought?

A How we are to go home, I cannot tell.

Ch And do not seek to go

An Trouble besets us.

Ch And erstwhile bore hardly on you

A Desperate then and now more cruel than despair

Ch Great verily is the sea of your troubles.

An Alas alas! O Zeus, whither shall we turn? To what last hope doth fate now urge us?

Enter THESEUS on the spectator's right

Th Weep no more maidens for where the kindness of the Dark Powers is an abiding grace to the quick and to the dead there is no room for mourning divine anger would follow

An Son of Aegeus, we supplicate thee!

Th For the obtaining of what desire my children?

An We fain would look with our own eyes upon our father's tomb

Th Nay it is not lawful

An How sayest thou king lord of Athens?

Th My children he gave me charge that no one should draw nigh unto that place or greet with voice the sacred tomb wherein he sleeps And he said that while I duly kept that word I should always hold the land unharmed These pledges therefore were heard from my lips by the god and by the all seeing Watcher of oaths the servant of Zeus

An Nay then if this is pleasing to the dead with this we must content us But send us to Thebes the ancient if haply we may hinder the bloodshed that is threatened to our brothers

Th So will I do and if in aught beside I can profit you and pleasure the dead who hath lately gone from us I am bound to spare no pains

Ch Come cease lamentation lift it up no more for verily these things stand fast

ANTIGONE

DRAMATIS PERSO Æ

A TIGO E } *daughters of Oedipus*	TEIR S *the blind pro het*
ISMENE }	CL RD *set to* *ch the corpse of*
CREO *King of Thebes*	P y e ces
E RYD E *f s R f*	FIRST MESS N ER
H EMON *his son*	SECO D MESSENGER *from the house*

CHORUS O THEB N ELD RS

Bef e the Royal P l ce at Thebes ANTIGONE *calls* ISME *forth from the palace in order to s ak to her lone*

A one Ism ne s te mine own d ar s t r knowest thou what ill the is, of all beque thed by Oedipus, that Zeus fulfils not f r us twain while we live? Nothing painful t th re n th frau ht with ruin, no ham n d ho our that I ha not seen in th oes nd min

And now what ew edict is this of which th t ll, the our Captain hath ju t publ shed to all Thebes? Knowest thou ht? Hast thou hear l Or is it hid den from thee that our fr end ar th eatened w th the doom fou foes?

Ismene No ord f friend Ant n ladsom or painful hath com t m sinc we t o sisters re bereft of broth s twain killed n on day by t ofold blow and sin in this la t n ht the A g e host hath fled I kn w no mo wh th r my fort ne be brighter or m re ous.

An. I knew t w ll, and ther for sou ht to brin thee beyond the gates of th court that thou mi ht est hear alone

I What is t? 'Tis plain that th u a t broodin on some dark tidin s.

A What hath t Creo d stined u brothers, the on t ho oured burial, the oth r to unburied shame E teocles, the sa with du observa e of right and custom, he hath laid i the ea th, f r his honour amon the dead bel w But the hapless corpse f Poly eices— rumour saith it hath been p b lished to th tow that nor e hall entomb him or mourn, but lea e unw pt unsepul hred wel ome tor for th birds, they espy him t feast o t will

Such, tis said is the edi t that the good Creon hath set f rth f thee and fo m —yes, fo me— and is coming hither t proclaim t lea l t those ho know t ot or coun the matt li ht, b t whoso disobey in he, h doom death by st g before all th folk Th u knowest t now and thou lt soon how wh ther thou rt nobly b ed or the base dau hter of n bl line

I Poor sister—and f thi gs tand thus, what could I help to do or und

An Consider f thou wilt share the toil and the deed

Is In what enture? What can be thy mean ng?

A W lt thou aid this han l to lift the dead?

Is Thou wouldst bury him—when ti forbidden to Thebes?

An I will do my part—and thine if thou w lt not —t a brother False to h m will I ne r be found

Is Ah o er bold! when Creon hath forb dden?

A N y he hath no ri ht to keep me from mi e own.

Is Ah m l th nk sister low our father perished amid hate and scorn wh n sins bared by his own sea ch had mo ed him to trike both eyes with self bl nd ng hand then the mother wife two names n on with twi ted noose did despite unto her l fe and last our two brothers in one da —each shed din hapless one a k nsman s blood—wrou ht o t with mutual hands their common doom. And now *we n turn*—we two left all alone—th nk how we shall perish, m e miserably than all the rest if in d fiance of the law we bra e a king s decr o h powers. N w mu t remember first that we re born women, as who should not stri e with men next that we are ruled of the stronger so that we must obey in these things, and in thin s yet so er I ther fore askin th Spirits Inf rnal to pardon seein that force is put on me herein will hea k n to ou rulers f r tis witless to be o e bu y

An. I will not urge thee—no, nor if thou yet hould t ha e the mind wouldst thou be welcome a a wo ker with *me* N y be what thou wilt but I will bury him well for me to die in doi g that I shall rest a lo ed one w th him whom I have l ved sinless in my crime for I owe a lon er allegiance t th dead than t the li in in that rld I shall abide for e er But if *th u* wilt be guilty of dishon oun, laws hich th gods ha stablished n honour

I I do them no di honour b t to defy the State —I ha e ro stre gth for that

A Such be thy plea I then will go to heap the earth bo the b th r whom I lo e

Is Alas, unhappy one! H w I fear f r thee!

A Fear t fo m guide thin own fate a ht

I At lea t then d sclose this plan to *none*, b t hid t closely—and so, too will I

An Oh denounce it! Thou wilt be far more hateful for thy silence if thou proclaim not these things to all

Is Thou hast a hot heart for chilling deeds

An I know that I please where I am most bound to please

Is Aye if thou canst but thou wouldst what thou canst not

An Why then when my strength fails I shall have done

Is A hopeless quest should not be made at all

An If thus thou speakest thou wilt have hatred from me and will justly be subject to the lasting hatred of the dead But leave me and the folly that is mine alone to suffer this dread thing for I shall not suffer aught so dreadful as an ignoble death

Is Go then if thou must and of this be sure—that though thine errand is foolish to thy dear ones thou art truly dear

Exit ANTIGONE *on the spectators left* ISMENE *retires into the palace by one of the two side doors When they have departed the* CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS *enters*

Chorus

Beam of the sun fairest light that ever dawned on Thebe of the seven gates thou hast shone forth at last eye of golden day arisen above Dircè s streams! The warrior of the white shield who came from Argos in his panoply hath been stirred by thee to headlong flight in swifter career

who set forth against our land by reason of the vexed claims of Polyneices and like shrill screaming eagle he flew over into our land in snow white pinion sheathed with an arm d throng and with plumage of helms

He paused above our dwellings he ravened around our sevenfold portals with spears athirst for blood but he went hence or ever his jaws were glutted with our gore or the Fire god s pine fed flame had seized our crown of towers So fierce was the noise of battle raised behind him a thing too hard for him to conquer as he wrestled with his dragon foe

For Zeus utterly abhors the boasts of a proud tongue and when he beheld them coming on in a great stream in the haughty pride of clanging gold he smote with brandished fire one who was now hasting to shout victory at his goal upon our ramparts

Swung down he fell on the earth with a crash torch in hand he who so lately in the frenzy of the mad onset was raging against us with the blasts of his tempestuous hate But those threats fared not as he hoped and to other foes the mighty War god dispensed their several dooms dealing havoc around a mighty helper at our need

For seven captains at seven gates matched against seven left the tribute of their panoplies to Zeus who turns the battle save those two of cruel fate who born of one sire and one mother set against each other their twain conquering spears and are sharers in a common death

But since Victory of glorious name hath come to us with joy responsive to the joy of Thebè whose chariots are many let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars and visit all the temples of the gods with night long dance and song and may Bacchus be our leader whose dancing shakes the land of Thebè

But lo the king of the land comes yonder Creon son of Menoeceus our new ruler by the new fortunes that the gods have given what counsel is he pondering that he hath proposed this special conference of elders summoned by his general mandate?

Enter CREON *from the central doors of the palace in the garb of king with two attendants*

Creon Sirs the vessel of our State after being tossed on wild waves hath once more been safely steadied by the gods and ye out of all the folk have been called apart by my summons because I knew first of all how true and constant was your reverance for the royal power of Laius how again when Oedipus was ruler of our land and when he had perished your steadfast loyalty still upheld their children Since then his sons have fallen in one day by a twofold doom—each smitten by the other each stained with a brother s blood—I now possess the throne and all its powers by nearness of kinship to the dead

No man can be fully known in soul and spirit and mind until he hath been seen versed in rule and lawgiving For if any being supreme guide of the State cleaves not to the best counsels but through some fear keeps his lips locked I hold and have ever held him most base and if any makes a friend of more account than his fatherland that man hath no place in my regard For I—be Zeus my witness who sees all things always—would not be silent if I saw ruin instead of safety coming to the citizens nor would I ever deem the country s foes a friend to myself remembering this that our country is the ship that bears us safe and that only while she prospers in our voyage can we make true friends

Such are the rules by which I guard this city s greatness And in accord with them is the edict which I have now published to the folk touching the sons of Oedipus that Eteocles who hath fallen fighting for our city in all renown of arms shall be entombed and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest But for his brother Polyneices—who came back from exile and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers and the shrines of his fathers gods—sought to taste of kindred blood and to lead the remnant into slavery touching this man it hath been proclaimed to our people that none shall grace him with sepulture or lament but leave him unburied a corpse for birds and dogs to eat a ghastly sight of shame

Such the spirit of my dealing and never by deed of mine shall the wicked stand in honour before the just but whoso hath good will to Thebes he shall be honoured of me in his life and in his death

Ch. Such is thy pleasure, Creon, son of Menoeceus, touching this city's foe, and its friend; and thou hast power, I ween, to take what order thou wilt, both for the dead, and for all us who live.

Cr. See, then, that ye be guardians of the mandate.

Ch. Lay the burden of this task on some younger man.

Cr. Nay, watchers of the corpse have been found.

Ch. What, then, is this further charge that thou wouldst give?

Cr. That ye side not with the breakers of these commands.

Ch. No man is so foolish that he is enamoured of death.

Cr. In sooth, that is the meed; yet lucre hath oft ruined men through their hopes.

Enter GUARD.

Guard My liege, I will not say that I come breathless from speed, or that I have plied a nimble foot; for often did my thoughts make me pause, and wheel round in my path, to return. My mind was holding large discourse with me: "Fool, why goest thou to thy certain doom?" "Wretch, tarrying again? And if Creon hears this from another, must not thou smart for it?" So debating, I went on my way with lagging steps, and thus a short road was made long. At last, however, it carried the day that I should come hither—to thee; and though my tale be nought, yet will I tell it; for I come with a good grip on one hope—that I can suffer nothing but what is my fate.

Cr. And what is it that disquiets thee thus?

Gu. I wish to tell thee first about myself—I did not do the deed—I did not see the doer—it were not right that I should come to any harm.

Cr. Thou hast a shrewd eye for thy mark; well dost thou fence thyself round against the blame: clearly thou hast some strange thing to tell.

Gu. Aye, truly; dread news makes one pause long.

Cr. Then tell it, wilt thou, and so get thee gone?

Gu. Well, this is it. The corpse—some one hath just given it burial, and gone away, after sprinkling thirsty dust on the flesh, with such other rites as piety enjoins.

Cr. What sayest thou? What living man hath dared this deed?

Gu. I know not; no stroke of pickaxe was seen there, no earth thrown up by mattock; the ground was hard and dry, unbroken, without track of wheels; the doer was one who had left no trace. And when the first day-watchman showed it to us, sore wonder fell on all. The dead man was veiled from us; not shut within a tomb, but lightly strewn with dust, as by the hand of one who shunned a curse. And no sign met the eye as though any beast of prey or any dog had come nigh to him, or torn him.

Then evil words flew fast and loud among us, guard accusing guard; and it would e'en have come to blows at last, nor was there any to hinder. Every man was the culprit, and no one was convicted, but all disclaimed knowledge of the deed. And we were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands;—to walk through fire;—to make oath by the gods that we had not done the deed,—that we were not privy to the planning or the doing.

At last, when all our searching was fruitless, one spake, who made us all bend our faces on the earth in fear; for we saw not how we could gainsay him, or escape mischance if we obeyed. His counsel was that this deed must be reported to thee, and not hidden. And this seemed best; and the lot doomed my hapless self to win this prize. So here I stand,—as unwelcome as unwilling, well I wot; for no man delights in the bearer of bad news.

Ch. O king, my thoughts have long been whispering, can this deed, perchance, be e'en the work of gods?

Cr. Cease, ere thy words fill me utterly with wrath, lest thou be found at once an old man and foolish. For thou sayest what is not to be borne, in saying that the gods have care for this corpse. Was it for high reward of trusty service that they sought to hide his nakedness, who came to burn their pillared shrines and sacred treasures, to burn their land, and scatter its laws to the winds? Or dost thou behold the gods honouring the wicked? It cannot be. No! From the first there were certain in the town that muttered against me, chafing at this edict, wagging their heads in secret; and kept not their necks duly under the yoke, like men contented with my sway.

'Tis by them, well I know, that these have been beguiled and bribed to do this deed. Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current among men. This lays cities low, this drives men from their homes, this trains and warps honest souls till they set themselves to works of shame; this still teaches folk to practise villainies, and to know every godless deed.

But all the men who wrought this thing for hire have made it sure that, soon or late, they shall pay the price. Now, as Zeus still hath my reverence, know this—I tell it thee on my oath:—If ye find not the very author of this burial, and produce him before mine eyes, death alone shall not be enough for you, till first, hung up alive, ye have revealed this outrage,—that henceforth ye may thieve with better knowledge whence lucre should be won, and learn that it is not well to love gain from every source. For thou wilt find that ill-gotten pelf brings more men to ruin than to weal.

Gu. May I speak? Or shall I just turn and go?

Cr. Knowest thou not that even now thy voice offends?

Gu. Is thy smart in the ears, or in the soul?

Cr. And why wouldst thou define the seat of my pain?

Gu. The doer vexes thy mind, but I, thine ears.

Cr. Ah, thou art a born babbler, 'tis well seen.

Gu. May be, but never the doer of this deed.

Cr. Yea, and more,—the seller of thy life for silver.

Gu. Alas! 'Tis sad, truly, that he who judges should misjudge.

Cr. Let thy fancy play with "judgment" as it will; but, if ye show me not the doers of these

things ye shall avow that dastardly gains work sorrows *Exit*

Gu Well may he be found! so twere best But be he caught or be he not—fortune must settle that —*truly thou wilt not see me here again Saved* even now beyond hope and thought I owe the gods great thanks *Exit*

Chorus

Wonders are many and none is more wonderful than man the power that crosses the white sea driven by the stormy south wind making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him and Earth the eldest of the gods the immortal the unwearied doth he wear turning the soil with the offspring of horses as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year

And the light hearted race of birds and the tribes of savage beasts and the sea brood of the deep he snares in the meshes of his woven toils he leads captive *man excellent in wit And he masters by his* arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds who roams the hills he tames the horse of shaggy mane he puts the yoke upon its neck he tames the tireless mountain bull

And speech and wind swift thought and all the moods that mould a state hath he taught himself and how to flee the arrows of the frost when tis hard lodging under the clear sky and the arrows of the rushing rain yea he hath resource for all without resource he meets nothing that must come only against Death shall he call for aid in vain but from baffling maladies he hath devised escapes

Cunning beyond fancy s dream is the fertile skill which brings him now to evil now to good When he *honours the laws of the land and that justice* which he hath sworn by the gods to uphold proudly stands his city no city hath he who for his rashness dwells with sin Never may he share my hearth never think my thoughts who doth these things!

Enter the GUARD *on the spectators left leading in* ANTIGONE

What portent from the gods is this?—my soul is amazed I know her—how can I deny that yon maiden is Antigone?

O hapless and child of hapless sire—of Oedipus! What means this? Thou brought a prisoner?—thou disloyal to the king s laws and taken in folly?

Gu Here she is the doer of the deed—we caught this girl burying him—but where is Creon?

Ch Lo he comes forth again from the house at our need

Enter CREON

Cr What is it? What hath chanced that makes my coming timely?

Gu O king against nothing should men pledge their word for the after thought belies the first intent I could have vowed that I should not soon be here again scared by thy threats with which I had just been lashed but—since the joy that surprises and transcends our hopes is like in fulness to no other pleasure—I have come though tis in breach of *my sworn oath bringing this maid who* was taken showing grace to the dead This time there was no casting of lots no this luck hath fallen to me and to none else And now sire take her thyself question her examine her as thou wilt but I have a right to free and final quittance of this trouble

Cr And thy prisoner here—how and whence hast thou taken her?

Gu She was burying the man thou knowest all.

Cr Dost thou mean what thou sayest? Dost thou speak aright?

Gu I saw her burying the corpse that thou hadst forbidden to bury Is that plain and clear?

Cr And how was she seen? how taken in the act?

Gu It befell on this wise When we had come to the place—with those dread menaces of thine upon us—we swept away all the dust that covered the corpse and bared the dank body well and then sat us down on the brow of the hill to windward heedful that the smell from him should not strike us every man was wide awake and kept his neighbour alert with torrents of threats if any one should be careless of this task

So went it until the sun s bright orb stood in mid heaven and the heat began to burn and then suddenly a whirlwind lifted from the earth a storm of dust a trouble in the sky and filled the plain marring all the leafage of its woods and the wide air was choked therewith we closed our eyes and bore the plague from the gods

And when after a long while this storm had passed the maid was seen and she cried aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness—even as when within the empty nest it sees the bed stripped of its *nestlings So she also when she saw the corpse bare*, lifted up a voice of wailing and called down curses on the doers of that deed And straightway she brought thirsty dust in her hands and from a shapely ewer of bronze held high with thrice poured drink offering she crowned the dead

We rushed forward when we saw it and at once closed upon our quarry who was in no wise dismayed Then we taxed her with her past and present doings and she stood not on denial of aught—at once to my joy and to my pain To have escaped from ills one s self is a great joy but tis painful to bring friends to ill Howbeit all such things are of less account to me than mine own safety

Cr Thou—thou whose face is bent to earth—dost thou avow or disavow this deed?

An I avow it I make no denial

Cr (*To* GUARD) Thou canst betake thee whither thou wilt free and clear of a grave charge

Exit GUARD

(*To* ANTIGONE) Now tell me thou—not in many words but briefly—knewest thou that an edict had forbidden this?

An I knew it could I help it? It was public

Cr. And thou did t indeed dare to transgress that la

A. Yes for was not Zeus that had publ hed me that edict not such are th laws set mong men by the Just ce who dwells with the gods below nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force that a mortal could o erride the unwritten and unfailing statutes of hea en. For their life is n t f to-day or yesterday but from all tim and no man kn ws en they wer first put forth.

Not throu h dread of y human pride could I answer to th o for b eakin t se Die I mu t— I knew that well (how should I not)—even w th out thy edicts. B t if I m to die before my time, I count that a gain for when any on li es, as I do, compassed about w th e ils, can such an o e find t but gain in death?

So for me to meet thi doom is trifling grief but if I had suffered my mother s son to lie in death an unburied corpse that would ha e grieved me for this, I m not grie ed. And if my present deed are foolish thy sight it may be that a fool h judge arraigns my folly

Ch. The maid shows h rself passionate child of passionate si and k ows n t how to bend before troubles.

Cr. Y t I would ha e thee know that o er stubborn spi ts are most often humbled tis the stiffest iron, baked i hard ess in the fire, that thou shalt oftenest see sna ped and shivered and I ha e known horses that s ow temper brou ht to orde b a little curb there is no oom for pride when thou rt th neighbour da Thi girl was already ersed in insolence wh n he tra s essed th law that had been set forth and, that done, lo, a second insult— to vaunt of t is, and exult in her deed

Now er I am no man, sh is the man, if this victory shal rest w th her and bring no penalty No be she si er s hild, or nea er to m n blood than that worships Zeus t the alta of ou house she nd h r kinsfolk hall not a oid a doom most dire for ndeed I charge that ther w th like share in the plottin f thi burial.

And summon h r—for I saw her e en now within, ra and not mistress of her wits So oft before the deed, th mind stands self-convicted its t ea son en folks are plott ng mischief in th dark. B t erily this, too, is hat ful—when one who hath been ca ht in w ckedness then seeks to make th crime a glory

A. Wouldst thou do mor than take and slay me

Cr. No more, indeed havin that, I hav all.

An. Wh then dost thou delay? In thy discourse there is nought that pleases m —n er may there be—and so my words must ed be unpleasan to thee. And t, for glory—when e ould I hav won a nobler t an by gi in burial to mine own b other? All her would own that they thou ht it well, were not their l s sealed b fear B t royalty b est in so much besides, hath the power to do and say what it will.

Cr. Thou differest from all these Thebans in that view

An. These also share it but they curb their tongues f r thee

Cr. And art thou not ashamed to act apart from them?

An. N there is n thin shameful in piety to a brother

Cr. Was it not a brother too, that died in the opposite cause?

A. Brother by the same mother and the same sire

Cr. Why then dost thou render a grace that is impious n his si ht?

A. The dead man will not sa that he so deems it

Cr. Yea if thou makest him *but equal in honour* with th wicked

A. It was his brother not his sla e that perished.

Cr. Wasting th s land while *he* fell as ts champion.

An. Ne ertheless, H des desires these *rites*.

Cr. B t the good desires not a like port on with th evil.

An. Who knows but this seems blameless in the world below?

Cr. A foe is ne r a friend—not even in death.

An. 'Tis not my nature to join in hati but in lo in

Cr. Pass, then, t the world of the dead nd, if thou must eeds lov lo e them. While I live *no* woman shall rul me.

Enter sm e *from the ho se led in by two at tendants*

Ch. Lo, yond r Ismene comes forth, shedding such tears as fond sisters weep a cloud upon her b ow casts its shadow o r her da kl flushing face and breaks in ra n on her fair cheek.

Cr. And thou, who, lurki like a per in my house wast secretly dra ning m life blood whil I knew not that I was nurturi two pests, to rise against my throne—com te l me now w lt thou also confess thy part in this b rial, or wilt thou for swear all knowled of it?

I. I ha e d ne th deed— f he allows my claim —and share the burden of th char

An. N j tice will not suffe thee to do that thou didst not consent to the deed or did I g e thee part in t

I. But, now that ills beset thee I m not ashamed to sail th sea of troubl at thy sid

An. Whose was the d ed Hades nd the dead are witnesses a friend in word s not the f end that I l

I. N y sister eject me not b t l t me die with thee, and dul honour th dead

An. Share t thou m death nor claim deeds to whi h thou hast n t put thy hand my death w ll suffice.

Is. And what l f dear t m be t of thee?

An. Ask Creon all th car s i h r

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than a good subject and in the storm of spears would stand his ground where he was set loyal and dauntless at his comrade's side.

But disobedience is the wor t of evils. This it is that ruins cities this makes homes desolate by this the ranks of allies are broken into headlong rout but of the lives whose course is fair the greater part owes safety to bedience. Therefore we must support the cause ford r and in no wise suffer a wom an to worst us. Better to *fall from power if we* must by a man s hand then we should not be called weaker *than a woman*.

Ch To us, unless our years have stolen our w t thou seemest t say wisely what thou sayest.

Hae Father the gods impla t reason in men the highest of all thi gs that we call our own Not mine the skill—far from me be the quest!—to say where in thou speakest n t aright and et an ther man too, might ha e some useful thought At least, it is my natural office to watch on thy behalf all that men say or do, or find to blame For the dread of thy frown forbids the citizen to speak such w rds as would offend thine ear b t *I can hear these mur* murs in the dark, these moanings of the city for this maiden *no woman* they say ever me ted her doom less—none ever was to die so sham fully for deeds so glor ous as hers who, when her wn brother had fallen in bloody strife would not lea e him un buried to be devoured by carrion dogs, or by any bird deserves not *she* the meed of golden ho our?

Such is the da kling rumour that spread in secret For me, my father no treasure is so p ecious as thy welfa e What i deed i a n bler ornament for children than a prospering sir s fair fame, or for sire than son s? Wear ot then, one mood only in thyself thi k *not that thy w rd and thine alo e* must be right. For if any man thinks that he alone is wise—that in speech or in mind h hath no peer —such a soul, hen laid open, is ever found empty

No, thou h man be wise tis no sham f him to learn ma y thi gs, nd to bend in season. Seest thou, beside th wintry t ent s course, how the trees that y ld t it sa e e ery tw g while the stiff necked perish root and branch? And even thus he ho keeps *the sheet of hi sail taut* and never sla k ens t, ' psets hi boat, and finishes his oyage with keel uppermost.

Na for th wr th permit th self to cha ge. For f I a younger man may ffe my thought t er far best, I e n, that men should be ll w se by nature b t therwise—*and oft the scale incli es* not so— tis good also t learn from those who peak ar ht.

Ch Sire, *tis* meet that thou shouldest profit by his ords, f he speaks ght in season, nd thou, Haemon, by thy fathe f r on both parts there ha h been e peech.

Cr M n f m e—a we indeed to be schooled then, by men f hi ?

Hae In nothing that is not right b t if I m young thou shouldest look to my merits, not to my years.

Cr Is it a m nt to honour the unruly?

Hae I could wish no one to show *respect for evil* doers.

Cr Then is not she tainted with that malady?

Hae Our Theban folk with one voice den es it

Cr *Shall Th bes prescr be to me* how I must rule?

Hae See there thou hast spoken like a youth in deed

Cr Am I to rule this land by other judgment than mine own?

Hae That is no c ty which belongs to one man

Cr Is not the city held to be the ruler s?

Hae Thou wouldst make a good monarch of a desert

Cr This boy it seems, is the woman s champion

H e If thou art a woman indeed my care is for thee

Cr Shameless, at open feud with thy father!

Hae N y I see thee offend ng against justice

Cr Do I offend when I respect mine own pre rogati es?

Hae Thou dost not respect them when thou *tramplest on the gods honours*.

Cr O dastard nature, yielding place to woman!

Hae Thou wilt ne er find me yield to baseness.

Cr All thy words, at least plead for that girl.

Hae And for thee, and for me, and for the gods below

Cr Thou canst never marry her on this side the gra e.

Hae Then she must d , and in death destroy another

Cr H w! doth thy boldness run to open threats?

Hae What threat i it to combat vain resol es?

Cr Thou shalt rue thy witless teaching of w sdom

Hae *Wert thou not my father I would have called* thee unwise

Cr Thou woman s sla e, *use not wheedling speech* with me

Hae Thou wouldest speak, and then hear n reply?

Cr Sayest thou so? Now by the heaven bo e us —be sure of it—thou shalt sma t fo tau ti g me in this opp brious train. Brin forth that hated thing that sh may d forthw th in h s presence—before his eyes—at her bridegroom s s de!

Hae No not at my side—ne er think it—shall she perish nor shalt thou e e set eyes more upon my fa —ra e then with such friends a can endur thee. *Exit HA MON*

Ch. The man is gone, O king in an ry haste a youthful m nd wh t g i fierce

Cr Let h m do or dream m e than man—good speed to him! But h shall not sa e these two g rls from th r doom.

Ch Dost thou ndeed purpose t slay both?

Cr N t her whose hand are pure thou sayest well.

Ch And by what doom mean st thou to slay the other?

Cr I w ll take h r where th path s loneliest and hid h li g ocky v ult with so much food set forth as pi ty prescr bes, that the c *ty may avoid*

Is Tell me—how can I serve thee even now?

An Save thyself I grudge not thy escape

Is Ah woe is me! And shall I have no share in thy fate?

An Thy choice was to live mine to die

Is At least thy choice was not made without my protest

An One world approved thy wisdom another mine

Is Howbeit the offence is the same for both of us

An Be of good cheer thou livest but my life hath long been given to death that so I might serve the dead

Cr Lo one of these maidens hath newly shown herself foolish as the other hath been since her life began

Is Yea O king such reason as nature may have given abides not with the unfortunate but goes astray

Cr Thine did when thou chosest vile deeds with the vile

Is What life could I endure without her presence?

Cr Nay speak not of her presence she lives no more

Is But wilt thou slay the betrothed of thine own son?

Cr Nay there are other fields for him to plough

Is But there can never be such love as bound him to her

Cr I like not an evil wife for my son

An Haemon beloved! How thy father wrongs thee!

Cr Enough enough of thee and of thy marriage!

Ch Wilt thou indeed rob thy son of this maiden?

Cr Tis Death that shall stay these bridals for me

Ch Tis determined it seems that she shall die

Cr Determined yes for thee and for me (*To the two attendants*) No more delay—servants take them within! Henceforth they must be women and not range at large for verily even the bold seek to fly when they see Death now closing on their life

Exeunt attendants guarding ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE CREON *remains*

Chorus

Blest are they whose days have not tasted of evil *For when a house hath once been shaken from heaven* there the curse fails nevermore passing from life to life of the race even as when the surge is driven over the darkness of the deep by the fierce breath of Thracian sea winds it rolls up the black sand from the depths and there is a sullen roar from wind vexed headlands that front the blows of the storm

I see that from olden time the sorrows in the house of the Labdacidae are heaped upon the sorrows of the dead and generation is not freed by generation but some god strikes them down and the race hath no deliverance

For now that hope of which the light had been spread above the last root of the house of Oedipus—that hope *in turn, is brought* low—by the blood stained dust due to the gods infernal and by folly in speech and frenzy at the heart

Thy power O Zeus what human trespass can limit? That power which neither Sleep the all ensnaring nor the untiring months of the gods can master but thou a ruler to whom time brings not *old age dwellest in the dazzling splendour of Olympus*

And through the future near and far as through the past shall this law hold good Nothing that is vast enters into the life of mortals without a curse

For that hope whose wanderings are so wide is to many men a comfort but to many a false lure of giddy desires and the disappointment comes on one who knoweth nought till he burn his foot against *the hot fire*

For with wisdom hath some one given forth the famous saying that evil seems good soon or late to him whose mind the god draws to mischief and but for the briefest space doth he fare free of woe

But lo Haemon the last of thy sons comes he grieving for the doom of his promised bride Antigone and bitter for the baffled hope of his marriage?

Enter HAEMON

Cr We shall know soon better than seers could tell us My son hearing the fixed doom of thy betrothed art thou come in rage against thy father? Or have I thy good will act how I may?

Haemon Father I am thine and thou in thy wisdom tracest for me rules which I shall follow No marriage shall be deemed by me a greater gain than thy good guidance

Cr Yea this my son should be thy heart s fixed law—in all things to obey thy father s will Tis for this that men pray to see dutiful children grow up around them in their homes—that such may requite their father s foe with evil and honour as their father doth his friend But he who begets *unprofitable* children—what shall we say that he hath sown but troubles for himself and much triumph for his foes? Then do not thou my son at pleasure s beck dethrone thy reason for a woman s sake knowing that this is a joy that soon grows cold in clasping arms—an evil woman to share thy bed and thy home For what wound could strike deeper than a false friend? Nay with loathing and as if she were thine enemy *let this girl go to find* a husband in the house of Hades For since I have taken her alone of all the city in open disobedience I will not make myself a liar to my people—I will slay her

So let her appeal as she will to the majesty of kindred *blood If I am to nurture mine own kindred in* naughtiness needs must I bear with it in aliens He who does his duty in his own household will be found righteous in the State also But if any one transgresses and does violence to the laws or thinks to dictate to his rulers such an one can win no praise from me No whomsoever the city may appoint that man must be obeyed in little things and great in just things and unjust and I should feel sure that one who thus obeys would be a good ruler no less

been mine n joy of marriage no port on in the nurtu f children but thus lo lo n of friends, un happy one I go li ing to th aults of death

A d wh t law of hea en have I tra sgressed? Why hapless one, should I look to the gods any more— hat ally should I in oke—wh n by piet I ha e earned th nam of impious? Nay th n if these thi gs are pleas g t the god when I ha e uff red m doom, I shall c me to know m n b t if the sin i with my jud es, I could wish them n f ller m s e of e l than they n the r part met wto f lly to me

Ch Still the same tempest of the soul e es this maiden ith the same fi re gusts

Cr Then for th s shall he guard ha e cause to ru the r lowness

A Ah m ! that wo d hath come ry near to death

Cr I can cheer thee with n h pe that th s doom is not thus to be fulfilled

A O city of my fathers in the land of Thebe! O ye gods, eldest of our r e!—they lead m hence —now ow—they tarry not! Behold m prin es of Th bes, the last daughter of the h use of y ur kings —see hat I suffer and from whom be use I feared t cast away th fear of Hea en!

A TIGO E *I d awaybytheguards*

Cho us

E e thus endu ed Danae in h s beauty to chan e the li ht of da f b ss bound alls a d s that hamber sec t s the gra she w s held close p s- *er* et was she of a p ud lineage O my daught r nd harried th the keeping of th seed of Zeus that f ll in the golde rain.

B t drea f l is th myste us pow f fat there is o d h erance from t by wealth o by war by fenced city or dark sea bear *n b s*

And bond tamed th so of Dry s ift to wrath that king f the Edonia s so pa d he f h f en zied taunts, *hen* by th will of Dionysus h wa pent in a rock p son. Ther th fierce ubera f his mad ess slo ly passed away That man learned to know the god wh m his frenz h had *p o- ked* th mocker es for he had sought t qu ll th god possessed wom nd the Ba hanalian fire and h g ed the M ses that l v th fl te

And by the waters of the Dark Rocks th waters of th t f d sea, ar th sh es f Bosporus, d Thracian Salmydessus wh e Ares, e hbou to the city saw th accu s bl ding n d deals t th tw sons of Phineu by h s fierce w f —the w u d that brou ht da kness t those enge -cra n orbs, smitt w th h r bloody hands, smitten w th her h ttl for d

Pinin n thei misery th y bewailed their *ru l* doom those son of moth hapless n h r ma riag but he traced her desc t f m the a c e t line of th E echtheidae and in f -distant ca es she was n rsed mid he father st ms, that ch ld of Boreas sw ft as a steed o er the steep h lls, a daugh ter of god yet upon her also the gray Fates bore ha d my daughter

Enter TEIR S AS *led by a Boy on the spectators right*

Teir sias Pri ces of Th bes, we have come w th linked steps both served b the eyes of one for thus, by a guide s help the blind must walk

Cr And what aged T iresias are thy t d ngs?

Te I w ll tell thee a d do thou hearken to the seer

Cr Indeed it has not been my wont to sl ht th y counsel

Te Therefore didst thou ste r our city s course ari ht

Cr I have felt nd can attest th benefits.

Te Mark that now once more thou sta dest on fate s fine edge

Cr What mean th ? How I shudder at thy mes sa e!

Te Thou wilt learn when th u hearest th arn ings of m art As I took my place on mine ld seat of au urs wh e all birds ha e been wo t to gather w thin my ken I heard str n e *voice amon them* they ere screamin w th d re fe e h ra e that drow ed their langua e in a jargon a d I k ew that they we e t nd ng each ther w th their talons mur der usly the wh rr of w ngs told no d ubtful tale

F rthw th n fear I essayed b nt sacrifice on a duly ki dled lta but from my off s gs the Fi e god h wed no flame a dank mo sture oozing from the thi h flesh trickled f rth upon the embers, and moked a d sputt red the gall was scattered t the air nd the streamin thi h lay bared of th fat that had been wrapped ound them

Such w the failu e of the rites by h ch l nl asked a gn fr m this bo I lea ed for l e s m guide s I am guide to oth rs. A d tis th s counsel that hath b ught th s s kness on our State For the ltars f our city and of our hearths ha e *been* tainted on and ll by b ds and dogs w th c r on from the hapless corpse the so of Oed pu and theref re the gods no m re accept pray r and sacri fi *at ou hand*, o th flame of meat-offeri g no doth any b rd gi e clea sign by it shr ll for they ha e tasted the fat ess of a lain ma s blood

Think th on these things, my son All men e liabl to err b t when n ror hath be n made that man s no lon w tless o u blest wh heals th ll into whi h he hath fallen and ema s not st bbo

Self will w know i curs the har e of folly Nay allow th claim of th dead stab not th fall n what p owess is t to lay the la a e ? I h e so ht thy good and f thy good I speak and ne e t sw et r t learn from a good counsellor than wh n he co sels f th own ga n.

Cr O d man ye all shoot you shafts t m as h *th* butts ye must needs pract se on me w th seer-craft lso) *th* se t be h th l ng trafficked in me a d made me the r merchandise. G n your gains dr y u tr d f ye list in the

a public stain And there praying to Hades the only god whom she worships perchance she will obtain release from death or else will learn at last though late that it is lost labour to revere the dead

Exit CREON

Chorus

Love unconquered in the fight Love who makest havoc of wealth who keepest thy vigil on the soft cheek of a maiden thou roamest over the sea and among the homes of dwellers in the wilds no immortal can escape thee nor any among men whose life is for a day and he to whom thou hast come is mad

The just themselves have their minds warped by thee to wrong for their ruin tis thou that hast stirred up this present strife of kinsmen victorious is the love kindling light from the eyes of the fair bride it is a power enthroned in sway beside the eternal laws for there the goddess Aphrodite is working her unconquerable will

ANTIGONE *is led out of the palace by two of* CREON S *attendants who are about to conduct her to her doom*

But now I also am carried beyond the bounds of loyalty and can no more keep back the streaming tears when I see Antigone thus passing to the bridal chamber where all are laid to rest

An See me citizens of my fatherland setting forth on my last way looking my last on the sunlight that is for me no more no Hades who gives sleep to all leads me living to Acheron s shore who have had no portion in the chant that brings the bride nor hath any song been mine for the crowning of bridals whom the lord of the Dark Lake shall wed

Ch Glorious therefore and with praise thou departest to that deep place of the dead wasting sickness hath not smitten thee thou hast not found the wages of the sword no mistress of thine own fate and still alive thou shalt pass to Hades as no other of mortal kind hath passed

An I have heard in other days how dread a doom befell our Phrygian guest the daughter of Tantalus on the Sipylian heights how like clinging ivy the growth of stone subdued her and the rains fail not as men tell from her wasting form nor fails the snow while beneath her weeping lids the tears bedew her bosom and most like to hers is the fate that brings me to my rest

Ch Yet she was a goddess thou knowest and born of gods we are mortals and of mortal race But tis great renown for a woman who hath perished that she should have shared the doom of the god like in her life and afterward in death

An Ah I am mocked! In the name of our fathers gods can ye not wait till I am gone—must ye taunt me to my face O my city and ye her wealthy sons? Ah fount of Dircè and thou holy ground of Thebè whose chariots are many ye at least will bear me witness in what sort unwept of friends and by what laws I pass to the rock closed prison of my strange tomb ah me unhappy! who have no home on the earth or in the shades no home with the living or with the dead

Ch Thou hast rushed forward to the utmost verge of daring and against that throne where Justice sits on high thou hast fallen my daughter with a grievous fall But in this ordeal thou art paying haply for thy father s sin

An Thou hast touched on my bitterest thought awaking the ever new lament for my sire and for all the doom given to us the famed house of Labdacus Alas for the horrors of the mother s bed! alas for the wretched mother s slumber at the side of her own son—and my sire! From what manner of parents did I take my miserable being! And to them I go thus accursed unwed to share their home Alas my brother ill starred in thy marriage in thy death thou hast undone my life!

Ch Reverent action claims a certain praise for reverence but an offence against power cannot be brooked by him who hath power in his keeping Thy self willed temper hath wrought thy ruin

An Unwept unfriended without marriage son I am led forth in my sorrow on this journey that can be delayed no more No longer hapless one may I behold yon day star s sacred eye but for my fate no tear is shed no friend makes moan

CREON *enters from the palace*

Cr Know ye not that songs and wailings before death would never cease if it profited to utter them? Away with her—away! And when ye have enclosed her according to my word in her vaulted grave leave her alone forlorn—whether she wishes to die or to live a buried life in such a home Our hands are clean as touching this maiden But this is certain—she shall be deprived of her sojourn in the light

An Tomb bridal chamber eternal prison in the caverned rock whither I go to find mine own those many who have perished and whom Persephone hath received among the dead! Last of all shall I pass thither and far most miserably of all before the term of my life is spent But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcome to my father and pleasant to thee my mother and welcome brother to thee for when ye died with mine own hands I washed and dressed you and poured drink offerings at your graves and now Polyneices tis for tending thy corpse that I win such recompense as this

And yet I honoured thee as the wise will deem rightly Never had I been a mother of children or if a husband had been mouldering in death would I have taken this task upon me in the city s despite What law ye ask is my warrant for that word The husband lost another might have been found and child from another to replace the first born but father and mother hidden with Hades no brother s life could ever bloom for me again Such was the law whereby I held thee first in honour but Creon deemed me guilty of error therein and of outrage ah brother mine! And now he leads me thus a captive in his hands no bridal bed no bridal song hath

been mine, no joys of marriage, no portion in the nurture of children; but thus, forlorn of friends, unhappy one, I go living to the vaults of death.

And what law of heaven have I transgressed? Why, hapless one, should I look to the gods any more—what ally should I invoke—when by piety I have earned the name of impious? Nay, then, if these things are pleasing to the gods, when I have suffered my doom, I shall come to know my sin; but if the sin is with my judges, I could wish them no fuller measure of evil than they, on their part, mete wrongfully to me.

Ch. Still the same tempest of the soul vexes this maiden with the same fierce gusts.

Cr. Then for this shall her guards have cause to rue their slowness.

An. Ah me! that word hath come very near to death.

Cr. I can cheer thee with no hope that this doom is not thus to be fulfilled.

An. O city of my fathers in the land of Thebes! O ye gods, eldest of our race!—they lead me hence—now, now—they tarry not! Behold me, princes of Thebes, the last daughter of the house of your kings—see what I suffer, and from whom, because I feared to cast away the fear of Heaven!

ANTIGONE *is led away by the guards*

Chorus

Even thus endured Danaë in her beauty to change the light of day for brass-bound walls; and in that chamber, secret as the grave, she was held close prisoner. Yet was she of proud lineage, O my daughter, and charged with the keeping of the seed of Zeus, that fell in the golden rain.

But dreadful is the mysterious power of fate; there is no deliverance from it by wealth or by war, by fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten ships.

And bonds tamed the son of Dryas, swift to wrath, that king of the Edonians; so paid he for his frenzied taunts, when, by the will of Dionysus, he was pent in a rocky prison. There the fierce exuberance of his madness slowly passed away. That man learned to know the god, whom in his frenzy he had provoked with mockeries; for he had sought to quell the god-possessed women, and the Bacchanalian fire; and he angered the Muses that love the flute.

And by the waters of the Dark Rocks, the waters of the twofold sea, are the shores of Bosporus, and Thracian Salmydessus; where Ares, neighbour to the city, saw the accursed, blinding wound dealt to the two sons of Phineus by his fierce wife—the wound that brought darkness to those avenging orbs, smitten with her bloody hands, smitten with her shuttle for a dagger.

Pining in their misery, they bewailed their cruel doom, those sons of a mother hapless in her marriage; but she traced her descent from the ancient line of the Erechtheidae; and in far-distant caves she was nursed amid her father's storms, that child of Boreas, swift as a steed over the steep hills, a daughter of gods; yet upon her also the grey Fates bore hard, my daughter.

Enter TEIRESIAS, *led by a Boy, on the spectators' right.*

Teiresias Princes of Thebes, we have come with linked steps, both served by the eyes of one; for thus, by a guide's help, the blind must walk.

Cr. And what, aged Teiresias, are thy tidings?

Te. I will tell thee; and do thou hearken to the seer.

Cr. Indeed, it has not been my wont to slight thy counsel.

Te. Therefore didst thou steer our city's course aright.

Cr. I have felt, and can attest, thy benefits.

Te. Mark that now, once more, thou standest on fate's fine edge.

Cr. What means this? How I shudder at thy message!

Te. Thou wilt learn, when thou hearest the warnings of mine art. As I took my place on mine old seat of augury, where all birds have been wont to gather within my ken, I heard a strange voice among them; they were screaming with dire, feverish rage, that drowned their language in a jargon; and I knew that they were rending each other with their talons, murderously; the whirr of wings told no doubtful tale.

Forthwith, in fear, I essayed burnt sacrifice on a duly kindled altar: but from my offerings the Fire-god showed no flame; a dank moisture, oozing from the thigh-flesh, trickled forth upon the embers, and smoked and sputtered; the gall was scattered to the air; and the streaming thighs lay bared of the fat that had been wrapped round them.

Such was the failure of the rites by which I vainly asked a sign, as from this boy I learned; for he is my guide, as I am guide to others. And 'tis thy counsel that hath brought this sickness on our State. For the altars of our city and of our hearths have been tainted, one and all, by birds and dogs, with carrion from the hapless corpse, the son of Oedipus: and therefore the gods no more accept prayer and sacrifice at our hands, or the flame of meat-offering; nor doth any bird give a clear sign by its shrill cry, for they have tasted the fatness of a slain man's blood.

Think, then, on these things, my son. All men are liable to err; but when an error hath been made, that man is no longer witless or unblest who heals the ill into which he hath fallen, and remains not stubborn.

Self-will, we know, incurs the charge of folly. Nay, allow the claim of the dead; stab not the fallen; what prowess is it to slay the slain anew? I have sought thy good, and for thy good I speak: and never is it sweeter to learn from a good counsellor than when he counsels for thine own gain.

Cr. Old man, ye all shoot your shafts at me, as archers at the butts;—ye must needs practise on me with seer-craft also;—aye, the seer-tribe hath long trafficked in me, and made me their merchandise. Gain your gains, drive your trade, if ye list, in the

a public stain And there praying to *Hades* the only god whom she worships perchance she will obtain release from death or else will learn at last though late that it is lost labour to revere the dead

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CREON *enters from the palace*

Cr Know ye not that songs and wailings before *death would never cease if it profited to utter them?* Away with her—away! And when ye have enclosed her according to my word in her vaulted grave leave her alone forlorn—whether she wishes to die or to live a *buried life in such a home Our hands are* clean as touching this maiden But this is certain—she shall be deprived of her sojourn in the light

An Tomb bridal chamber eternal prison in the caverned rock whither *I go to find mine own* those many who have perished and whom Persephone hath received among the dead! Last of all shall I pass *thither and far most miserably of all* before the term of my life is spent But I cherish good hope that my coming will be welcome to my father and pleasant to thee my mother and welcome brother to thee for when ye died with mine own hands I washed and dressed you and poured drink offerings at your graves and now Polyneices tis for tending thy corpse that I win such recompense as this

And yet I honoured thee as the wise will deem rightly Never had I been a mother of children or if a husband had been mouldering in death would I have taken this task upon me in the city s despite What law ye ask is my warrant for that word The husband lost another might have been found and child from another to replace the first born but father and mother hidden with Hades no brother s *life could ever bloom for me again* Such was the law whereby I held thee first in honour but Creon deemed me guilty of error therein and of outrage ah brother mine! And now he leads me thus a captive in his hands no *bridal bed no bridal song hath*

would ever praise or blame as settled. Fortune raises and Fortune humbles the lucky or unlucky from day to day, and no one can prophesy to men concerning those things which are established. For Creon was blest once, as I count bliss; he had saved this land of Cadmus from its foes; he was clothed with sole dominion in the land; he reigned, the glorious sire of princely children. And now all hath been lost. For when a man hath forfeited his pleasures, I count him not as living—I hold him but a breathing corpse. Heap up riches in thy house, if thou wilt; live in kingly state; yet, if there be no gladness therewith, I would not give the shadow of a vapour for all the rest, compared with joy.

Ch. And what is this new grief that thou hast to tell for our princes?

Me. Death; and the living are guilty for the dead.

Ch. And who is the slayer? Who the stricken? Speak.

Me. Haemon hath perished; his blood hath been shed by no stranger.

Ch. By his father's hand, or by his own?

Me. By his own, in wrath with his sire for the murder.

Ch. O prophet, how true, then, hast thou proved thy word!

Me. These things stand thus; ye must consider of the rest.

Ch. Lo, I see the hapless Eurydice, Creon's wife, approaching; she comes from the house by chance, haply, or because she knows the tidings of her son.

Enter EURYDICE.

Eurydice. People of Thebes, I heard your words as I was going forth, to salute the goddess Pallas with my prayers. Even as I was loosing the fastenings of the gate, to open it, the message of household woe smote on mine ear: I sank back, terror-stricken, into the arms of my handmaids, and my senses fled. But say again what the tidings were; I shall hear them as one who is no stranger to sorrow.

Me. Dear lady, I will witness of what I saw, and will leave no word of the truth untold. Why, indeed, should I soothe thee with words in which I must presently be found false? Truth is ever best. I attended thy lord as his guide to the furthest part of the plain, where the body of Polyneices, torn by dogs, still lay unpitied. We prayed the goddess of the roads, and Pluto, in mercy to restrain their wrath; we washed the dead with holy washing; and with freshly-plucked boughs we solemnly burned such relics as there were. We raised a high mound of his native earth; and then we turned away to enter the maiden's nuptial chamber with rocky couch, the caverned mansion of the bride of Death. And, from afar off, one of us heard a voice of loud wailing at that bride's unhallowed bower; and came to tell our master Creon.

And as the king drew nearer, doubtful sounds of a bitter cry floated around him; he groaned, and said in accents of anguish, "Wretched that I am, can my foreboding be true? Am I going on the wofullest way that ever I went? My son's voice greets me. Go, my servants, haste ye nearer, and when ye have reached the tomb, pass through the gap, where the stones have been wrenched away, to the cell's very mouth, and look, and see if 'tis Haemon's voice that I know, or if mine ear is cheated by the gods."

This search, at our despairing master's word, we went to make; and in the furthest part of the tomb we descried *her* hanging by the neck, slung by a thread-wrought halter of fine linen; while *he* was embracing her with arms thrown around her waist, bewailing the loss of his bride who is with the dead, and his father's deeds, and his own ill-starred love.

But his father, when he saw him, cried aloud with a dread cry and went in, and called to him with a voice of wailing:—"Unhappy, what a deed hast thou done! What thought hath come to thee? What manner of mischance hath marred thy reason? Come forth, my child! I pray thee—I implore!" But the boy glared at him with fierce eyes, spat in his face, and, without a word of answer, drew his cross-hilted sword:—as his father rushed forth in flight, he missed his aim;—then, hapless one, wroth with himself, he straightway leaned with all his weight against his sword, and drove it, half its length, into his side; and, while sense lingered, he clasped the maiden to his faint embrace, and, as he gasped, sent forth on her pale cheek the swift stream of the oozing blood.

Corpse enfolding corpse he lies; he hath won his nuptial rites, poor youth, not here, yet in the halls of Death; and he hath witnessed to mankind that, of all curses which cleave to man, ill counsel is the sovereign curse.

EURYDICE *retires into the house.*

Ch. What wouldst thou augur from this? The lady hath turned back, and is gone, without a word, good or evil.

Me. I, too, am startled; yet I nourish the hope that, at these sore tidings of her son, she cannot deign to give her sorrow public vent, but in the privacy of the house will set her handmaids to mourn the household grief. For she is not untaught of discretion, that she should err.

Ch. I know not; but to me, at least, a strained silence seems to portend peril, no less than vain abundance of lament.

Me. Well, I will enter the house, and learn whether indeed she is not hiding some repressed purpose in the depths of a passionate heart. Yea, thou sayest well: excess of silence, too, may have a perilous meaning.

Exit MESSENGER.

Enter CREON, *on the spectators' left, with attendants, carrying the shrouded body of* HAEMON *on a bier.*

Ch. Lo, yonder the king himself draws near, bearing that which tells too clear a tale,—the work of no stranger's madness,—if we may say it,—but of his own misdeeds.

Cr. Woe for the sins of a darkened soul, stubborn sins, fraught with death! Ah, ye behold us, the sire who hath slain, the son who hath perished! Woe is me, for the wretched blindness of my counsels!

silver gold of Sardis and the gold of India but ye shall not hide that man in the grave—no though the eagles of Zeus should bear the carrion morsels to their Master s throne—no *not for dread of that de* filement will I suffer his burial for well I know that no mortal can defile the gods But aged Teiresias the wisest fall with a shameful fall when they clothe shameful thoughts in fair words for lucre s sake

Te Alas! Doth any *man* know doth any consid er

Cr Whereof? What general truth dost thou an nounce?

Te How precious above all wealth is good counsel

Cr As folly I think is the worst mischief

Te Yet thou art tainted with that distemper

Cr I would not answer the seer with a taunt

Te But thou dost in saying that I prophesy falsely

Cr Well the prophet tribe was ever fond of money

Te And the race bred of tyrants loves base gain

Cr Knowest thou that thy speech is spoken of thy king?

Te I know it for through me thou hast saved Thebes

Cr Thou art a wise seer but thou lovest evil deeds

Te Thou wilt rouse me to utter the dread secret in my soul

Cr Out with it! Only speak it not for gain

Te Indeed methinks I shall not—as touching thee

Cr Know that thou shalt not trade on my resolve

Te Then know thou—aye know it well—that thou shalt not live through many more courses of the sun s swift chariot ere one begotten of thine own loins shall have been given by thee a corpse for corpses because thou hast thrust children of the sunlight to the shades and ruthlessly lodged a living soul in the grave but keepest in this world one who belongs to the gods infernal a corpse unburied un honoured all unhallowed In such thou hast no part no have the gods above but this is a violence done to them by thee Therefore the avenging destroyers lie in wait for thee the Furies of Hades and of the gods that thou mayest be taken in these same ills

And mark well if I speak these things as a hireling A time not long to be delayed shall awaken the wail ing of men and of women in thy house And a tu mult of hatred against thee stirs all the cities whose mangled sons had the burial rite from dogs or from wild beasts or from some winged bird that bore a polluting breath to each city that contains the hearths of the dead

Such arrows for thy heart—since thou provokest me—have I launched at thee archer like in my anger sure arrows of which thou shalt not escape the smart Boy lead me home that he may spend his rage on younger men and learn to keep a tongue more temperate and to bear within his breast a bet ter mind than now he bears *Exit* TEIRESIAS

Ch The man hath gone O king with dread proph ecies And since the hair on this head once dark hath been white I know that he hath never been a false prophet to our city

Cr I too know it well and am troubled in soul Tis dire to yield but by resistance to smite my pride with ruin—this too is a dire choice

Ch Son of Menoeceus it behoves thee to take wise counsel

Cr What should I do then? Speak and I will obey

Ch Go thou and free the maiden from her rocky chamber and make a tomb for the unburied dead

Cr And this is thy counsel? Thou wouldst have me yield?

Ch Yea King and with all speed for swift harms from the gods cut short the folly of men

Cr Ah me tis hard but I resign my cherished resolve—I obey We must not wage a vain war with destiny

Ch Go thou and do these things leave them not to others

Cr Even as I am I ll go on on my servants each and all of you take axes in your hands and hasten to the ground that ye see yonder! Since our judg ment hath taken this turn I will be present to un loose her as I myself bound her My heart misgives me tis best to keep the established laws even to life end

Chorus

O thou of many names glory of the Cadmeian bride *offspring of loud thundering Zeus*! thou who watchest over famed Italia and reignest where all guests are welcomed in the sheltered plain of Eleu sinian Deo! O Bacchus dweller in Thebè mother city of Bacchants by the softly gliding stream of Ismenus on the soil where the fierce dragon s teeth were sown!

Thou hast been seen where torch flames glare through smoke above the crests of the twin peaks where move the Corycian nymphs thy votaries, hard by Castalia s stream

Thou comest from the ivy mantled slopes of Nysa s hills and from the shore green with many clustered vines while thy name is lifted up on strains of more than mortal power as thou visitest the ways of Thebè

Thebè of all cities thou holdest first in honour thou and thy mother whom the lightning smote and now when all our people is captive to a violent plague come thou with healing feet over the Par nassian height or over the moaning strait!

O thou with whom the stars rejoice as they move the stars whose breath is fire O master of the voices of the night son begotten of Zeus appear O king with thine attendant Thyiads who in night long frenzy dance before thee the giver of good gifts Iacchus!

Enter MESSENGER *on the spectators left hand*

Messenger Dwellers by the house of Cadmus and of Amphion there is no estate of mortal life that I

AJAX

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Athena	Teucer
Ajax	Menelaus
Odysseus	Agamemnon
Tecmessa	Chorus of Salaminian
	Sailors

Mute: The child Eurysaces, *son of Ajax and Tecmessa. Two heralds accompanying* Menelaus (p. 104). *Two bodyguards in attendance on Agamemnon.* Attendants *of* Teucer (p. 97).

Before the tent of Ajax at the eastern end of the Greek camp, near Cape Rhoeteum on the northern coast of the Troad. Odysseus *is closely examining footprints in the sandy ground.* Athena *is seen in the air.*

Athena. Ever have I seen thee, son of Laertes, seeking to snatch some occasion against thy foes; and now at the tent of Ajax by the ships, where he hath his station at the camp's outermost verge, I see thee long pausing on his trail and scanning his fresh traces, to find whether he is within or abroad. Well doth it lead thee to thy goal, thy course keen-scented as a Laconian hound's. For the man is even now gone within, sweat streaming from his face and from hands that have slain with the sword. And there is no further need for thee to peer within these doors; but say what is thine aim in this eager quest, that thou mayest learn from her who can give thee light.

Odysseus. Voice of Athena, dearest to me of the Immortals, how clearly, though thou be unseen, do I hear thy call and seize it in my soul, as when a Tyrrhenian clarion speaks from mouth of bronze! And now thou hast discerned aright that I am hunting to and fro on the trail of a foeman, even Ajax of the mighty shield. 'Tis he, and no other, that I have been tracking so long.

This night he hath done to us a thing which passes thought—if he is indeed the doer; for we know nought certain, but drift in doubt; and I took upon me the burden of this search. We have lately found our cattle, our spoil, dead—ravaged by human hand—and dead, beside them, the guardians of the flock.

Now, all men lay this crime to him. And a scout who had descried him bounding alone over the plain with reeking sword brought me tidings, and declared the matter. Then straightway I rushed upon his track; and sometimes I recognise the footprints as his, but sometimes I am bewildered, and cannot read whose they are. Thy succour is timely; thine is the hand that ever guides my course—as in the past, so for the days to come.

Ath. I know it, Odysseus, and came early on the path, a watcher friendly to thy chase.

Od. Dear mistress, do I toil to purpose?

Ath. Know that yon man is the doer of these deeds.

Od. And why was his insensate hand put forth so fiercely?

Ath. In bitter wrath touching the arms of Achilles.

Od. Why, then, this furious onslaught upon the flock?

Ath. 'Twas in your blood, as he deemed, that he was dyeing his hand.

Od. What? Was this design aimed against the Greeks?

Ath. He would have accomplished it, too, had I been careless.

Od. And how had he laid these bold plans? What could inspire such hardihood?

Ath. In the night he went forth against you, by stealth, and alone.

Od. And did he come near us? Did he reach his goal?

Ath. He was already at the doors of the two chiefs.

Od. What, then, stayed his eager hand from murder?

Ath. I, even I, withheld him, for I cast upon his eyes the overmastering fancies of his baleful joy, and I turned his fury aside on the flocks of sheep, and the droves, yet undivided, guarded by the herdsmen, the spoil which we had not yet divided. Then he fell on, and dealt death among the horned throng, as he hewed them to the earth around him; and now he deemed that the two Atreidae were the prisoners whom he slew with his hand, now twas this chief, now that, at each new onset. And while the man raved in the throes of frenzy, I still urged him, hurled him into the toils of doom. Anon, when he rested from this work, he bound together the living oxen, with all the sheep, and brought them home, as though his captives were men, not goodly kine. And now he torments them, bound together, in the house.

But to thee also will I show this madness openly, that when thou hast seen it thou mayest proclaim it to all the Greeks. And be thou steadfast and of a good courage, nor look for evil from the man; for I

Alas my son thou hast died in thy youth by a timeless doom woe is me! thy spirit hath fled not by thy folly but by mine own!

Ch Ah me how all too late thou seemest to see the right!

Cr Ah me I have learned the bitter lesson! But then methinks oh then some god smote me from above with crushing weight and hurled me into ways of cruelty woe is me overthrowing and trampling on my joy! Woe woe for the troublous toils of men!

Enter MESSENGER *from the house*

Me Sire thou hast come methinks as one whose hands are not empty but who hath store laid up besides thou bearest yonder burden with thee and thou art soon to look upon the woes within thy house

Cr And what worse ill is yet to follow upon ills?

Me Thy queen hath died true mother of yon corpse—ah hapless lady!—by blows newly dealt

Cr Oh Hades all receiving whom no sacrifice can appease! Hast thou then no mercy for me? O thou herald of evil bitter tidings what word dost thou utter? Alas I was already as dead and thou hast smitten me anew! What sayest thou my son? What is this new message that thou bringest—woe woe is me!—of a wife s doom of slaughter heaped on slaughter?

Ch Thou canst behold tis no longer hidden within

The doors of the palace are opened and the corpse of EURYDICE *is disclosed*

Cr Ah me yonder I behold a new a second woe! What destiny ah what can yet await me? I have but now raised my son in my arms and there again I see a corpse before me! Alas alas unhappy mother! Alas my child!

Me There at the altar self stabbed with a keen knife she suffered her darkening eyes to close when she had wailed for the noble fate of Megareus who died before and then for his fate who lies there and when with her last breath she had invoked evil fortunes upon thee the slayer of thy sons

Cr Woe woe! I thrill with dread Is there none to strike me to the heart with two edged sword? O miserable that I am and steeped in miserable anguish!

Me Yea both this son s doom and that other s, were laid to thy charge by her whose corpse thou seest

Cr And what was the manner of the violent deed by which she passed away?

Me Her own hand struck her to the heart when she had learned her son s sorely lamented fate

Cr Ah me this guilt can never be fixed on any other of mortal kind for my acquittal! I even I was thy slayer wretched that I am—I own the truth Lead me away O my servants lead me hence with all speed whose life is but as death!

Ch Thy counsels are good if there can be good with ills briefest is best when trouble is in our path

Cr Oh let it come let it appear that fairest of fates for me that brings my last day—aye best fate of all! Oh let it come that I may never look upon to morrow s light

Ch These things are in the future present tasks claim our care the ordering of the future rests where it should rest

Cr All my desires at least were summed in that prayer

Ch Pray thou no more for mortals have no escape from destined woe

Cr Lead me away I pray you a rash foolish man who have slain thee ah my son unwittingly and thee too my wife—unhappy that I am! I know not which way I should bend my gaze or where I should seek support for all is amiss with that which is in my hands —and yonder again a crushing fate hath leapt upon my head

As CREON *is being conducted into the house the* CORYPHAEUS *speaks the closing verse*

Ch Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows and in old age teach the chastened to be wise

Never of thine own heart, son of Telamon, wouldst thou have gone so far astray as to fall upon the flocks. Yes, when the gods send madness, it must come; but may Zeus and Phoebus avert the evil rumour of the Greeks!

And if the great chiefs charge thee falsely in the furtive rumours which they spread, or sons of the wicked line of Sisyphus, forbear, O my king, forbear to win me an evil name by still keeping thy face thus hidden in the tent by the sea.

Nay, up from thy seat, wheresoever thou art brooding in this pause of many days from battle, making the flame of mischief blaze up to heaven! But the insolence of thy foes goes abroad without fear in the breezy glens, while all men mock with taunts most grievous; and my sorrow passes not away.

Enter TECMESSA.

Tecmessa Mariners of Ajax, of the race that springs from the Erechtheidae, sons of the soil,—mourning is our portion who care for the house of Telamon afar. Ajax, our dread lord of rugged might, now lies stricken with a storm that darkens the soul.

Ch. And what is the heavy change from the fortune of yesterday which this night hath brought forth? Daughter of the Phrygian Teleutas, speak; for to thee, his spear-won bride, bold Ajax hath borne a constant love; therefore mightest thou hint the answer with knowledge.

Te. Oh, how shall I tell a tale too dire for words? Terrible as death is the hap which thou must hear. Seized with madness in the night, our glorious Ajax hath been utterly undone. For token, thou mayest see within his dwelling the butchered victims, weltering in their blood, sacrifices of no hand but his.

Ch. What tidings of the fiery warrior hast thou told, not to be borne, nor yet escaped—tidings which the mighty Danai noise abroad, which their strong rumour spreads! Woe is me, I dread the doom to come: shamed before all eyes, the man will die, if his frenzied hand hath slain with dark sword the herds and the horse-guiding herdsmen.

Te. Alas! 'twas thence, then—from those pastures—that he came to me with his captive flock! Of part, he cut the throats on the floor within; some hewn, their sides, he rent asunder. Then he caught up two white-footed rams; he sheared off the head of one, and the tongue-tip, and flung them away; the other he bound upright to a pillar, and seized a heavy thong of horse-gear, and flogged with shrill doubled lash, while he uttered revilings which a god, and no mortal, had taught.

Ch. The time hath come for each of us to veil his head and betake him to stealthy speed of foot, or to sit on the bench at the quick oar and give her way to the sea-faring ship. Such angry threats are hurled against us by the brother kings, the sons of Atreus. I fear to share a bitter death by stoning, smitten at this man's side, who is swayed by a fate that none may draw nigh.

T. It sways him no longer: the lightnings flash no more; like a southern gale, fierce in its first onset, his rage abates; and now, in his right mind, he hath new pain. To look on self-wrought woes, when no other hath had a hand therein—this lays sharp pangs to the soul.

Ch. Nay, if his frenzy hath ceased, I have good hope that all may yet be well; the trouble is of less account when once 'tis past.

Te. And which, were the choice given thee, wouldst thou choose—to pain thy friends, and have delights thyself, or to share the grief of friends who grieve?

Ch. The twofold sorrow, lady, is the greater ill.

Te. Then are we losers now, although the plague is past.

Ch. What is thy meaning? I know not how thou meanest.

Te. Yon man, while frenzied, found his own joy in the dire fantasies that held him, though his presence was grievous to us who were sane; but now, since he hath had pause and respite from the plague, he is utterly afflicted with sore grief, and we likewise no less than before. Have we not here two sorrows, instead of one?

Ch. Yea verily; and I fear lest the stroke of a god hath fallen. How else, if his spirit is no lighter now that the malady is overpast than when it vexed him?

Te. Thus stands the matter, be well assured.

Ch. And in what wise did the plague first swoop upon him? Declare to us, who share thy pain, how it befell.

Te. Thou shalt hear all that chanced, as one who hath part therein. At dead of night, when the evening lamps no longer burned, he seized a two-edged sword, and was fain to go forth on an aimless path. Then I chid him, and said, 'What dost thou, Ajax? why wouldst thou make this sally unsummoned—not called by messenger, not warned by trumpet? Nay, at present the whole army sleeps.'

But he answered me in curt phrase and trite: 'Woman, silence graces women.' And I, thus taught, desisted; but he rushed forth alone. What happened abroad, I cannot tell; but he came in with his captives bound together—bulls, shepherd dogs, and fleecy prisoners. Some he beheaded; of some he cut the back-bent throat, or cleft the chine; others, in their bonds, he tormented as though they were men, with onslaught on the cattle.

At last he darted forward through the door, and began to utter to some creature of his brain—now against the Atreidae, now about Odysseus—with many a mocking taunt of all the despite that he had wreaked on them in his raid. Anon he rushed back once more into the house; and then, by slow painful steps, recovered his reason.

And, as his gaze ranged over the room full of his wild work, he struck his head, and uttered a great cry; he fell down, a wreck amid the wrecks of the slaughtered sheep, and there he sat, with clenched nails tightly clutching his hair. At first, and for a long while, he sat dumb; then he threatened me with those dreadful threats, if I declared not all the

will turn away the vision of his eyes and keep them from beholding thy face

Ho thou who art binding with cords the back bent arms of thy captives I call thee come hither! Ajax what ho! come forth from the house!

Od What dost thou Athena? Never call him forth

Ath Hold thy peace! Do not earn the name of coward!

Od Forbear I pray thee be content that he stay within

Ath What is the danger? Was he not a man before?

Od Yea a foeman to thy servant and still is

Ath And to mock at foes—is not that the sweetest mockery?

Od Enough for me that he abide within his doors

Ath Thou fearest to see a madman in full view?

Od No fear had made me shun him if he were sane

Ath Nay even now he shall not see thee though thou art near

Od How so if he still sees with the same eyes?

Ath I will darken them though they are open

Od Well all is possible when a god contrives

Ath Stand silent then and stay where thou art

Od I must stay Would that I were far from here!

Ath What ho Ajax once again I call thee! is this thy scanty regard for thine ally?

Enter AJAX *holding a blood stained scourge in his hand*

Ajax Hail Athena! Hail Zeus born maid! How well hast thou stood by me! Yea I will crown thy shrine with trophies of pure gold for this prize!

Ath Tis fairly spoken But tell me this—hast thou dyed thy sword well in the Greek camp?

Aj That vaunt is mine I disclaim it not

Ath And perchance turned thine armed hand on the Atreidae?

Aj So that nevermore will they dishonour Ajax

Ath The men are dead as I take thy meaning

Aj Dead now let them rob me of my arms!

Ath Good and then the son of Laertes—in what plight hast thou left him? Hath he escaped thee?

Aj What thou askest me of that accursed fox?

Ath Yea in sooth—of Odysseus thine adversary

Aj No guest so welcome Lady he is sitting in the house—in bonds I do not mean him to die just yet

Ath What wouldst thou do first? What larger advantage wouldst thou win?

Aj First he shall be bound to a pillar beneath my roof—

Ath The hapless man—what despite wilt thou do unto him?

Aj —and have his back crimsoned with the scourge ere he die

Ath Nay do not torture the wretch so cruelly

Aj In all else Athena I say have thy will but *his* doom shall be none but this

Ath Nay then since it delights thee to do thus hold not thy hand abate no jot of thine intent

Aj I go to my work but thou I charge thee stand ever at my side as thou hast stood to-day!

Exit AJAX

Ath Seest thou Odysseus how great is the strength of the gods? Whom couldest thou have found more prudent than this man or more valiant for the service of the time?

Od I know none and I pity him in his misery for all that he is my foe because he is bound fast to a dread doom I think of mine own lot no less than his For I see that we are but phantoms all we who live or fleeting shadows

Ath Therefore beholding such things look that thine own lips never speak a haughty word against the gods and assume no swelling port if thou prevailest above another in prowess or by store of ample wealth For a day can humble all human things, and a day can lift them up but the wise of heart are loved of the gods and the evil are abhorred

Enter the CHORUS OF SALAMINIAN SAILORS *followers of* AJAX

Chorus

Son of Telamon thou whose wave girt Salamis is firmly throned upon the sea when thy fortunes are fair I rejoice but when the stroke of Zeus comes on thee or the angry rumour of the Danai with noise of evil tongues then I quake exceedingly and am sore afraid like a winged dove with troubled eye

And so telling of the night now spent loud murmurs beset us for our shame telling how thou didst visit the meadow wild with steeds and didst destroy the cattle of the Greeks their spoil—prizes of the spear which had not yet been shared—slaying them with flashing sword

Such are the whispered slanders that Odysseus breathes into all ears and he wins large belief For now the tale that he tells of thee is specious and each hearer rejoices more than he who told despitefully exulting in thy woes

Yea point thine arrow at a noble spirit and thou shalt not miss but should a man speak such things against me he would win no faith Tis on the powerful that envy creeps Yet the small without the great can ill be trusted to guard the walls lowly leagued with great will prosper best great served by less

But foolish men cannot be led to learn these truths. Even such are the men who rail against thee and we are helpless to repel these charges without thee O king Verily when they have escaped thine eye they chatter like flocking birds but terrified by the mighty vulture suddenly perchance—if thou shouldst appear— they will cower still and dumb

Was it the Tauric Artemis child of Zeus that drave thee—O dread rumour parent of my shame! —against the herds of all our host—in revenge I ween for a victory that had paid no tribute whether it was that she had been disappointed of glorious spoil or because a stag had been slain without a thank offering? Or can it have been the mail clad Lord of War that was wroth for dishonour to his aiding spear and took vengeance by nightly wiles?

Achilles lived, and had been called to decree the first place in valour to any claimant of his arms, no one would have grasped them before me. But now the Atreidae have conveyed them to a villain, and thrust away the high deeds of Ajax.

And if these eyes, if this warped mind had not swerved from the purpose that was mine, never would they have procured such a judgment against another man. As it was, the daughter of Zeus, the fierce-eyed, unconquerable goddess, foiled me at the instant when I was making ready my hand against them, struck me with a plague of frenzy, made me embrue my hands in the blood of these poor cattle. And yon men exult to have escaped me—by no good will of mine; but if a god send harm, verily e'en the base man can elude the worthier.

And now what shall I do, who plainly am hateful to the gods, abhorred by the Greek host, hated by all Troy and all these plains? Shall I forsake the station of the ships, and leave the Atreidae forlorn, and go homeward across the Aegean? And what face shall I show to my father when I come—to Telamon? How will he find heart to look on me, when I stand before him ungraced—without that meed of valour whereby *he* won a great crown of fame? 'Tis not to be endured.

But then shall I go *to* the stronghold of the Trojans—attack alone, where all are foes—and, in doing some good service, lastly die? Nay, thus I might haply gladden the Atreidae. It must not be. Some emprise must be sought whereby I may prove to my aged sire that in heart, at least, his son is not a dastard.

'Tis base for a man to crave the full term of life who finds no varying in his woes. What joy is there in day following day—now pushing us forward, and now drawing us back, on the verge—of death? I rate that man as nothing worth, who feels the glow of idle hopes. Nay, one of generous strain should nobly live, or forthwith nobly die: thou hast heard all.

Ch. No man shall say that thou hast spoken a bastard word, Ajax, or one not bred of thy true soul. Yet forbear: dismiss these thoughts, and suffer friends to overrule thy purpose.

Te. Ajax, my lord, the doom given by fate is the hardest of evils among men. I was the daughter of a free-born sire, wealthy and mighty, if any Phrygian was; and now I am a slave; for so the gods decreed, I ween, and thy strong hand. Therefore, since wedlock hath made me thine, I wish thee well; and I do entreat thee, by the Zeus of our hearth, by the marriage that hath made us one, doom me not to the cruel rumour of thy foes, abandon me not to the hand of a stranger! On what day soever thou diest, and leavest me lonely by thy death, on that same day be sure I also shall be seized forcibly by the Greeks, and with thy son shall have the portion of a slave. Then shall some one of my masters name me in bitter phrase, with keen taunt: 'See the concubine of Ajax, his, who was the mightiest of the host; what menial tasks are hers, who had such bliss!' Thus shall men speak; and destiny will afflict me, but these words will be shameful for thee and for thy race.

Nay, have thought for thy father, whom thou forsakest in a drear old age; for thy mother—and hers are many years—who oft prays to the gods that thou come home alive; and pity, O king, thy son, if, bereft of fostering care, he must spend his days forlorn of thee, the ward of unloving guardians; think how great is this sorrow, which at thy death thou wilt bequeath to him and me.

I have nothing left whereunto I can look, save thee. Thou didst ravage my country with the spear, and another doom hath laid low my mother and my sire, that they should dwell with Hades in their death. What home, then, could I find, if I lost thee? What wealth? On thee hangs all my welfare. Nay, have thought for me also: a true man should cherish remembrance, if anywhere he reap a joy. 'Tis kindness that still begets kindness. But whosoever suffers the memory of benefits to slip from him, that man can no more rank as noble.

Ch. Ajax, I would that pity touched thy soul as it doth mine; so wouldst thou approve her words.

Aj. Verily she shall have approval *on my part*, if only she take heart to do my bidding well.

Te. Nay, dear Ajax, I will obey in all things.

Aj. Then bring me my son, that I may see him.

Te. Oh, but in those fears I released him from my keep.

Aj. During these troubles of mine? Or what meanest thou?

Te. Yea, lest haply the poor child should meet thee, and die.

Aj. Aye, truly, that would have been worthy of my fortune.

Te. Well, at least I was watchful to avert *that* woe.

Aj. I praise thy deed, and the foresight which thou hast shown.

Te. How, then, can I serve thee, as the case stands now?

Aj. Let me speak to him, and see him face to face.

Te. Oh yes—he is close by, in charge of attendants.

Aj. Then wherefore is his coming delayed?

Te. My child, thy father calls thee. Bring him hither, servant, whosoever of you is guiding his steps.

Aj. Comes the man at thy call? Or hath he failed to hear thy word?

Te. Even now one of the servants there draws near with him.

Enter Attendant with Eurysaces.

Aj. Lift him, lift him to mine arms. He will feel no dread, I ween, in looking on this newly-shed blood, if he is indeed my true-born son. But he must at once be broken in to his father's stern ways, and moulded to the likeness of his nature. Ah, boy, mayst thou prove happier than thy sire, but in all else like him; and thou wilt prove not base. Yet even now I may well envy thee for this, that thou hast no sense of these ills. Yea, life is sweetest before the feelings are awake (for lack of feeling is a painless ill)—until one learns to know joy or pain. But when

chance that had befallen and asked in what strange plight he stood And I friends in my fear told all that had been done so far as I surely knew it But he straightway broke into bitter lamentations such as never had I heard from him before For he had ever taught that such wailing was for craven and low hearted men no cry of shrill complaint would pass his lips only a deep sound as of a moaning bull

But now prostrate in his utter woe tasting not of food or drink the man sits quiet where he has fallen amidst the sword slain cattle And plainly he yearns to do some dread deed there is some such meaning in his words and his laments Ah my friends —indeed this was my errand—come in and help if in any wise ye can Men in his case can be won by the words of friends

Ch Tecmessa daughter of Teleutas dread are thy tidings that our lord hath been frenzied by his sorrows

Aj (*within*) Woe woe is me!

Te Soon there will be worse belike Heard ye not Ajax—heard ye not that resounding cry?

Aj Woe woe is me!

Ch The man seems to be distempered or else to be grieving for the distempers which lately vexed him when he see their work

Aj O my son my son!

Te Ah me! Eurysaces tis for thee he calls! What can be his purpose? Where art thou? Unhappy that I am!

Aj Ho Teucer! Where is Teucer? Will his foray last for ever? And I perish!

Ch He seems to be sane Come open there! open —perchance e en at the sight of me he may come to a more sober mood

Te Behold I open thou canst look on yon man s deeds and his own plight

AJAX *is discovered sitting amidst the slaughtered cattle*

Aj Alas good sailors alone of my friends alone still constant to your loyalty behold what a wave hath but now surged around me and hemmed me in under stress of a deadly storm!

Ch Ah lady how sadly true seems thy report! The fact proves that no sane mind is here

Aj Alas ye mates staunch in sea craft ye who manned the ship and made the oar blade flash upon the brine—in you in you alone I see a defence against misery come *slay me also!*

Ch Hush thy wild lips cure not ill by ill nor increas the anguish of the doom

Aj Seest thou the bold the strong of heart the dauntless in battles with the foe—seest thou how I have shown my prowess on creatures that feared no harm? Alas the mockery! How then have I been shamed!

Te Ajax my lord I implore thee speak not thus!

Aj Hence! out with thee! avaunt—begone!—Woe is me! woe is m !

Ch For the gods love yield to counsel and learn wisdom!

Aj Wretch that I am who suffered the accursed *men to slip through my hands but fell on horned* kine and goodly flocks and made their dark blood flow!

Ch Why grieve when the deed is past recall These things can never be but as they are

Aj Ah thou who watchest all things thou ready tool of every crime ah son of Laertes thou foulest knave in all the host I warrant thou laughest loud and long for joy!

Ch As the god gives so every man laughs or mourns

Aj Yet would that I could see him shattered though I am! Ah me ah me!

Ch Speak no proud word seest thou not to what a plight thou hast come?

Aj O Zeus father of my sires would that I might slay that deep dissembler that hateful knave and the two brother chiefs and lastly die myself also!

Te When thou makest that prayer pray therewith for me also that I die wherefore should I live when thou art dead?

Aj Alas thou darkness my sole light! O thou nether gloom fairer for me than any sunshine! take me to dwell with you—yea take me for I am no longer worthy to look for help to the race of the gods or for any good from men the children of a day

No the daughter of Zeus the strong goddess torments me to the death Whither then shall a man flee? Whither shall I go to find rest? If my past fame is destroyed my friends along with such victims as these near me—if I have set myself to win a mad man s triumphs and all the host with sword uplifted in both hands would strike me dead!

Te Ah me unhappy that a good man and true should utter such words—words that till now he ne er would have deigned to speak!

Aj Alas ye paths of the sounding wave ye sea caves and wooded pastures by the shore long time long time and very weary have ye known me tarrying at Troy but no more shall ye know me—no more with the breath of life of so much let sane men be sure

Ah streams of Scamander near us kindly to the Greeks never shall ye look on Ajax more who e peer in the host— for I will utter a proud word— never hath Troy seen come from the land of Hellas but now behold he hath been humbled to the dust!

Ch In sooth I know not how to restrain thee or how suffer thee to speak whom woes so grievous have befallen

Aj Ay me! Who could e er have thought that my name would chime so meetly with my doom? For well may I now mourn—yea twice and three times mourn—in those sad syllables that shape my name such heavy griefs are mine whose sire by his prowess won the fairest prize of all the host and brought all glory home from this land of Ida but I his son who came after him in might not less to this same ground of Troy and proved the service of mine hand in no meaner deeds thus perish dishonoured of the Greeks Yet methinks of thus much am I sure if

show aid and service, as knowing that he will not avail thee. For to most men the haven of friendship is false.

But concerning these things it will be well. Woman, go thou within, and pray to the gods that in fulness the desires of my heart may be fulfilled. And ye, my friends—honour ye these my wishes even as she doth; and bid Teucer, when he comes, have care for me, and good will towards you withal. For I will go whither I must pass; but do ye what I bid, and ere long, perchance, though now I suffer, ye will hear that I have found peace. *Exit* AJAX.

Ch. I thrill with rapture; I soar on the wings of sudden joy! O Pan, O Pan, appear to us, O Pan, roving over the sea, from the craggy ridge of snow-beaten Cyllene, king who makest dances for the gods, that with me thou mayest move blithely in the measures that none hath taught thee, the measures of Nysa and of Cnossus! For now am I fain to dance. And may Apollo, lord of Delos, come over the Icarian waters to be with me, in presence manifest and spirit ever kind!

The destroying god hath lifted the cloud of dread trouble from our eyes. Joy, joy! Now once again, now, O Zeus, can the pure brightness of good days come to the swift sea-cleaving ships, since Ajax again forgets his trouble, and hath turned to perform the law of the gods with all due rites, in perfectness of loyal worship.

The strong years make all things fade; nor would I say that aught was too strange for belief, when thus, beyond our hopes, Ajax hath been led to repent of his wrath against the Atreidae and his dread feuds.

Enter MESSENGER *from the Greek camp.*

Messenger. Friends, I would first tell you this—Teucer is but now returned from the Mysian heights; he hath come to the general quarters in mid camp, and is being reviled by all the Greeks at once. They knew him from afar as he drew near, gathered around him, and then assailed him with taunts from this side and from that, every man of them, calling him "that kinsman of the maniac, of the plotter against the host," saying that he should not save himself from being mangled to death by stoning. And so they had come to this, that swords plucked from sheaths were drawn in men's hands; then the strife, when it had run well nigh to the furthest, was allayed by the soothing words of elders. But where shall I find Ajax, to tell him this? He whom most it touches must hear all the tale.

Ch. He is not within; he hath gone forth but now, for he hath yoked a new purpose to his new mood.

Me. Alas! Alas! Too late, then, was he who sent me on this errand—or I have proved a laggard.

Ch. And what urgent business hath been scanted here?

Me. Teucer enjoined that the man should not go forth from the house until he himself should come.

Ch. Well, he is gone, I tell thee—intent on the purpose that is best for him—to make his peace with the gods.

Me. These are the words of wild folly, if there is wisdom in the prophecy of Calchas.

Ch. What doth he prophesy? And what knowledge of this matter dost thou bring?

Me. Thus much I know—for I was present. Leaving the circle of chiefs who sat in council, Calchas drew apart from the Atreidae; then he put his right hand with all kindness in the hand of Teucer, and straitly charged him that by all means in his power he should keep Ajax within the house for this day that now is shining on us, and suffer him not to go abroad—if he wished ever to behold him alive. This day alone will the wrath of divine Athena vex him—so ran the warning.

"Yea," said the seer, "lives that have waxed too proud, and avail for good no more, are struck down by heavy misfortunes from the gods, as often as one born to man's estate forgets it in thoughts too high for man. But Ajax, even at his first going forth from home, was found foolish, when his sire spake well. His father said unto him: 'My son, seek victory in arms, but seek it ever with the help of heaven.' Then haughtily and foolishly he answered: 'Father, with the help of gods even a man of nought might win the mastery; but I, even without their aid, trust to bring that glory within my grasp.' So proud was his vaunt. Then once again, in answer to divine Athena—when she was urging him onward and bidding him turn a deadly hand upon his foes—in that hour he uttered a speech too dread for mortal lips: 'Queen, stand thou beside the other Greeks; where Ajax stands, battle will never break our line.' By such words it was that he brought upon him the appalling anger of the goddess, since his thoughts were too great for man. But if he lives this day, perchance, with the god's help we may find means to save him."

Thus far the seer; and Teucer had no sooner risen from where they sat than he sent me with these mandates for thy guidance. But if we have been foiled, that man lives not, or Calchas is no prophet.

Ch. Hapless Tecmessa, born to misery, come forth and see what tidings yon man tells: this peril touches us too closely for our peace.

Enter TECMESSA.

Te. Why do ye break my rest again, ah me, when I had but just found peace from relentless woes?

Ch. Hearken to yon man, and the tidings of Ajax that he hath brought us, to my grief.

Te. Alas, what sayest thou, man? Are we undone?

Me. I know not of thy fortune, but only that, if Ajax is abroad, my mind is ill at ease for him.

Te. He is abroad indeed, so that I am in anguish to know thy meaning.

Me. Teucer straitly commands that ye keep Ajax under shelter of the roof, and suffer him not to go forth alone.

Te. And where is Teucer, and wherefore speaks he thus?

Me. He hath but now returned, and forbodes that this going forth is fraught with death to Ajax.

Te. Unhappy me! from whom can he have learned this?

thou shalt come unto that knowledge then must thou see to prove among thy father s foes of what mettle and what sire thou art

Meanwhile feed on light breezes and nurse thy tender life for this thy mother s joy No fear I wot lest any of the Greeks assail thee with cruel outrage even when thou hast me no more So trusty is the warder whom I will leave to guard thee even Teucer who will not falter in his care for thee albeit now he is following a far path busied with chase of foes

O my warriors seafaring comrades! On you as on him I lay this task of love and give ye my behest to Teucer that he take this child *to mine own home* and set him before the face of Telamon and of my mother Eribeoa that so he may prove the comfort of their age evermore [until they come unto the deep places of the nether god] And charge him that no stewards of games nor he who worked my ruin make mine arms a prize for the Greeks No *this* take thou my son—the broad shield from which thou hast thy name—hold and wield it by the well wrought thong that sevenfold spear proof targe! But the rest of my armour shall be buried in my grave

(*To* TECMESSA) Come tarry not take the child straightway make fast the doors and utter no laments before the house in sooth a woman is a plaintive thing Quick close the house! It is not for a skilful leech to whine charms over a sore that craves the knife

Ch I am afraid when I mark this eager haste I like not the keen edge of thy speech

Te Ajax my lord on what deed can thy mind be set?

Aj Ask not inquire not tis good to be discreet

Te Ah my heavy heart! Now by thy child —by the gods—I implore thee be not guilty of forsaking us!

Aj Nay thou vexest me over much knowest thou not that I no longer owe aught of service to the gods?

Te Hush hush!

Aj Speak to those who hear

Te And wilt *thou* not hearken?

Aj Already thy words have been too many

Te I am afraid O prince!

Aj (*To the Attendants*) Close the doors I say this instant!

Te For the gods love be softened!

Aj Tis a foolish hope methinks if thou wouldst begin now to school my temper

AJAX *is shut into the tent Exit* TECMESSA *with* EURYSACES

Chorus

O famous Salamis thou I ween hast thy happy seat among the waves *that lash thy shore the joy of* all men s eyes for ever but I hapless have long been tarrying here still making my couch through countless months in the camp on the fields of Ida worn by time and darkly looking for the day when I shall pass to Hades the abhorred the unseen

And now I must wrestle with a new grief woe is me!—the incurable malady of Ajax visited by a heaven sent frenzy whom in a bygone day thou sentest forth from thee mighty in bold war but now a changed man who nurses lonely thoughts he hath been found a heavy sorrow to his friends And the former deeds of his hands deeds of prowess supreme *have fallen dead nor won aught of love from* the loveless the miserable Atreidae

Surely his mother full of years and white with eld will uplift a voice of wailing when she hears that he hath been stricken with the spirit s ruin *not in the nightingale s plaintive note will she utter* her anguish in shrill toned strains the dirge will rise with sound of hands that smite the breast and with rending of hoary hair

Yes better hid with Hades is he whom vain fancies vex *he who by the lineage whence he springs* is noblest of the war tried Achaeans yet now is true no more to the promptings of his inbred nature but dwells with alien thoughts

Ah hapless sire how heavy a curse upon thy son doth it rest for thee to hear a curse which never yet hath clung *to any life of the Aeacidae save his!*

Enter AJAX *with a sword in his hand*

Aj All things the long and countless years first draw from darkness then bury from light and there is nothing for which man may not look the dread oath is vanquished and the stubborn will For even I erst so wondrous firm—yea as iron hardened in the dipping—felt the keen edge of my temper softened by yon woman s words and I feel the pity of leaving her a widow with my foes and the boy an orphan

But I will go to the bathing place and the meadows by the shore that in purging of my stains I may flee the heavy anger of the goddess Then I will seek out some untrodden spot and bury this sword hatefullest of weapons in a hole dug where none shall see no let Night and Hades keep it under ground! For since my hand took this gift from Hector my worst foe to this hour I have had no good from the Greeks Yes men s proverb is true *The gifts of enemies are no gifts and bring no good*

Therefore henceforth I shall know how to yield to the gods and learn to revere the Atreidae They are rulers so we must submit How else? Dread things and things most potent bow to office thus it is that snow strewn winter gives place to fruitful summer and thus night s weary round makes room for day with her white steeds to kindle light and the breath of dreadful winds can allow the groaning sea to slumber and like the rest almighty Sleep *looses whom he has bound nor holds with a perpet*ual grasp

And we—must we not learn discretion? I at least will learn it for I am newly aware that our enemy is to be hated but as one who will hereafter be a friend and towards a friend I would wish but thus far to

Ah, hapless Ajax, from what he ht fallen how low! H worthy e en in th s ght of foes to be mourned!

Ch Thou ast fated hapless o thou wa t fated then th that unbend ng soul at la t to wo k out an evil doom of oes untold! Such was the men of those compla n gs which by night and by day I heard thee utt r i thy fierce mood bitter against the At id e th a deadly pass on Aye that time was a potent source of sorrows, when the golden arms ere made th prize in a contest of prowess!

T Woe oe is me!

Ch The gu h pierces I know to thy true heart

Te Woe woe is m !

Ch I marv l not lady that thou shouldst wa l, and wail again ho ha t lately been bereft of one so loved

T T for thee to conjectur f these things—for me, to f el them but too sorely

Ch Yea even so

T Alas, my ch ld to what a yoke of bondage are we com seei what ta k ma ters a e set er thee and me!

Ch Oh the two Atreidae ould be ruthless—those deed of th irs would be u peakabl wh ch thou namest in hintin at such a woe! But may the gods t t!

T N er had thes th gs stood thus save by the will of the gods.

Ch Yea they ha e la d n u a burden too heavy to be bor e.

T Yet su h th oe that th d ughter f Zeus, the dread goddess, en enders f Odysseus sake

Ch Do btless, th pat ent her exults h dark soul, a d mock th ke n mockery t thes sorr ws born f frenzy Alas! A d w th him when th hear th tid gs, la gh the oval b thers, the At eidae

T Th let them mock d exult in th s ma s woes. Per hanc th u h th y missed h m ot wh l h li ed they ill b l h m dead the strait of warfar Ill judgi g men k ow n t the good that was in the ha ds, till they ha e lost it To my pain hath he died mo e than fo ther joy and to h wn tent All that h yea ed t win hath h made his own—the death f wh ch h l nged O er th s man th n h f e h uld they tri mph? His death concerns th god n t th m—n rl Then l t Od sseus t l in empty taunts. Aja is f r th m no more t me h hath l ft a guish nd m rning—and is gone

Teucer (*pproach g*) Woe oe is m !

Ch Hush—m thinks I hear th e f Teu er raised in a stra that hath r d to th d woe

Enter TE C

Teu Bel ed Aj x br tl er whose fa e was so dear t m —ha t th u ndeed fa ed a rum r holds?

Ch H hath perished Teu f that be sure.

Teu Woe is m th f my heavy fate!

Ch k o that thus t st nds—

Teu H pless hapless that I m!

Ch And thou ha t ca se to m urn.

T u O fi ce nd sudden blow!

Ch Thou say st but too truly Teucer

Teu Ay me!—But tell me of y n man s child—where shall I fi l him in the land of Troy?

Ch Al ne by the tent

Teu (*To* TEC s) The bri g him hither with all speed lest some foeman snatch him up as a wh lp from a l ones f l rn! Away—ha te—be r help! 'Ti all men s y ont to triumph o er the dead when they lie l
Exit TE ME A

Ch Yea wh le he yet l ed Teucer yon man charged thee to have care for the ch ld e en as thou hast care indeed

Teu O s ght most gr you to me of all that e er mine eyes have beheld! O bitter to my heart above all paths that I ha trod th path that now hath led me h ther when I learned thy fate ah best l ed Ajax as I as pursu and tracking out thy foot steps! For a s ift rumour abo t th e as from some god passed through the G eek host tell ng that thou wa t dead and gone I heard it ah me while yet far off and groaned l w but now the s ght breaks my heart!

Come—l ft the co er ng and let me see the worst (*The corpse of* AJ X *is unco ered*)

O thou f em dread t look on wherein d elt such cr el c rage what sorrows hast thou sown for me in thy death!

Wh ther can I betake me to what people after b g n thee no succour in thy troubles? Telamon m think thy sire and m e s l ke to greet me w th sun y face and g ac u m en when I come with ut thee Aye s rely—he ho e en when good f rtune befalls him is not wont to smile more brightly than bef e

What will such n one keep back? What t unt will he t utter ga t the ba tard begotten f om the war p ize of h spea ag inst him wh betrayed thee b fo ed Aj x l ke a co ard and a cra n— r by guile that when thou wa t dead he m ght en y thy lo d h p and thy house? So w ll he speak—a pass onate man pee h n old age whose wrath makes strife e en with ut a cause A d in the e d I shall b thrust f m the e lm nd cast off—branded by h tau t s n m re a freeman but a la e

Such is my prospect at hom wh le at T oy I ha mans foes, d few th ngs t help m All th s ha l caped b thy death! Ah me what hall I do? h draw thee hapless n f m the cr l point of th gleam g w d the sla e it seems to whom th ha t y lded up thy breath? Now seest tho how Hector thou h dead wa to destroy the at th last?

Co ider I pray you the fo tune f these two men W th th y g dl that had been given t him b Ajax Hect r wa gripped to the ha i t rail d ma led till he ga up th ghost. Tw fr m H ct th t Aja h d thi gift nd by this hath h per hed i h deadly fall Was it n t the F rs who f rged th s blad wa not that g dle wr ght by H des g m t fi ? I at least wo ld deem that these th ng nd ll things e r ar pla ned by god f m b t l th r be any in whose

Me From Thestor's son the seer this day—when the issue is one of life or death for Ajax

Te Ah me my friends protect me from the doom threatened by fate! Speed some of you to hasten Teucer's coming let others go to the westward bays and others to the eastward and seek the man's ill omened steps I see now that I have been deceived by my lord and cast out of the favour that once I found with him Ah me my child what shall I do? We must not sit idle nay I too will go as far as I have strength Away—let us be quick— tis no time to rest if we would save a man who is in haste to die

Ch I am ready and will show it in more than word speed of act and foot shall go therewith

The scene changes to a lonely place on the shore of the Hellespont with underwood or bushes)

Enter AJAX

Aj The slayer stands so that he shall do his work most surely—if leisure serves for so much thought—the gift of Hector that foeman friend who was most hateful to my soul and to my sight tis fixed in hostile soil the land of Troy with a new edge from the iron biting whet and I have planted it with heedful care so that it should prove most kindly to me in a speedy death

Thus on my part all is ready and next be thou O Zeus—as is meet—the first to aid me tis no large boon that I will crave Send I pray thee some messenger with the ill news to Teucer that he may be the first to raise me where I have fallen on this reeking sword lest I be first espied by some enemy and cast forth a prey to dogs and birds For thus much O Zeus I entreat thee and I call also on Hermes guide to the nether world that he lay me softly asleep without a struggle at one quick bound when I have driven this sword into my side

And I call for help to the maidens who live for ever and ever look on all the woes of men the dread far striding Furies let them mark how my miserable life is blasted by the Atreidae And may they overtake those evil men with doom most evil and with utter blight [even as they behold me fall *self slain so slain by kinsfolk may those men perish* at the hand of their best loved offspring] Come ye swift and vengeful Furies glut your wrath on all the host and spare not!

And thou whose chariot wheels climb the heights of heaven thou Sun god when thou lookest on the land of my sires draw in thy rein o erspread with gold and tell my disasters and my death to mine aged father and to the hapless woman who reared me Poor mother! I think when she hears those tidings her loud wail will ring through all the city But it avails not to make idle moan now for the deed as quickly as I may

O Death Death come now and look upon me! Nay to thee will I speak in that other world also when I am with thee But thee thou present beam of the bright day and the Sun in his chariot I accost for the last last time—as never more hereafter O sunlight! O sacred soil of mine own Salamis firm seat of my father's hearth! O famous Athens and thy race kindred to mine! And ye springs and rivers of this land—and ye plains of Troy I greet you also—farewell ye who have cherished my life! This is the last word that Ajax speaks to you henceforth he will speak in Hades with the dead

AJAX *falls upon his sword*

The CHORUS *re enters in two bands*

First Semi Chorus Toil follows toil and brings but toil! Where where have my steps not been? And still no place is conscious of a secret that I share Hark—a sudden noise!

Second Semi Chorus Tis we the shipmates of your voyage

Semi Ch I How goes it?

Semi Ch II All the westward side of the ships hath been paced

Semi Ch I Well hast thou found aught?

Semi Ch II Only much toil and nothing more to see

Semi Ch I And clearly the man hath not been seen either along the path that fronts the morning ray

Ch O for tidings from some toilin fisher busy about his sleepless quest or from some nymph of the Olympian heights, or of the streams that flow toward Bosporus—if anywhere such hath seen the man of fierce spirit roaming! Tis hard that I the wanderer who have toiled so long cannot come near him with prospered course but fail to descry where the sick man is

Enter TECMESSA

Te Ah me ah me!

Ch Whose cry broke from the covert of the wood near us?

Te Ah miserable!

Ch I see the spear won bride hapless Tecmessa her soul is steeped in the anguish of that wail

Te I am lost undone left desolate my friends!

Ch What ails thee?

Te Here lies our Ajax newly slain—a sword buried and sheathed in his corpse

Ch Alas for my hopes of return! Ah prince thou *hast slain me the comrade of thy voyage!* Hapless man—broken hearted woman!

Te Even thus is it with him tis ours to wail

Ch By whose hand then can the wretched man have done the deed?

Te By his own tis well seen this sword which he planted in the ground and on which he fell convicts him

Ch Alas for my blind folly all alone then thou hast fallen in blood unwatched of friends! And I took no heed so dull was I so witless! Where where lies Ajax that wayward one of ill boding name?

Te No eye shall look on him nay in this enfolding robe I will shroud him wholly for no man who loved him could bear to see him as up to nostril and forth from red gash he spirts the darkened blood from the self-dealt wound Ah me what shall I do? What friend shall lift thee in his arms? Where is Teucer? How timely would be his arrival might he but come to compose the corpse of this his brother!

Teu. And hear my answer—he shall be buried forthwith.

M Once did I see a man bold of tongue who had urged sailors to a voyage in t me of storm in ...om thou would t ha e found no voi e when the stress of the tempest was upon h m but h dden beneath his cloak, he would suffer the crew to trample on him at will. And so with thee and thy fierce speech—perchance a great tempest thou h ast breath come from a littl cloud shall q ench thy b awing.

Teu. Yea and I have seen a man f ll of folly who mocked in his nei hbour woes and it came to pass that ma like to m and of like mood be held him and spake such words as these M n do not e l to the dead for I thou dost be sure that thou w t come t harm So warned he th misguided one before him and know that I see that man, and methinks he is none else but thou ha e I spoken in riddles?

M I ll go it ere a d race to ha e it known that I was chidin when I have th power to compel.

Teu Begone then! For me t s th worse dis race that I should h ten to a fool s idle prate

Exit ME ELAUS.

Ch A dread strife will be brou ht to the trial. But thou, T ucer w th what speed thou ma est haste t seek hou w grav for so ma where he shall rest in his dark, dank tomb that men shall ever hold in fame.

Enter TECME *and* CH L

Teu. Lo, just in time our lord s child nd h s w fe draw n h, to tend the burial of the hapless corpse

M hid, com hither take th pla near h m, and h thy hand a pphant upon th m And I el as one ho mplores h lp w th lock of ha r in thy hand—mine hers, and thirdly thine—th suppliant s sto e. B t if a man of the host sh uld tear thee by iolence from this dead then, f r e il doom on evil d ed, may h perish out of th land and find no gra and w th him be hi race cut off root nd branch e n I se r this lock Take t boy nd keep and let no on mo thee but kneel th re a L n t th dead

And e ben t women t hi side but bear you like men for his defence till I eturn wh n I hav prepared a gra fo this man, though all the wo ld forbid.

Exit TE ER.

Chorus

When, h when, will th numbe f the restless years be fil at what term will they cease that b ing on me th u end g woe of a war s e ds throughout the wide land of Troy for th sorrow and th sham f G eec ?

Would that th man had passed to the d pths of the sk to all rece ing Hades, who taught Greeks how to leagu themsel es fo war n hateful arms! Ah those toils of his from which so many toils ha e spru ! Yea he it was who wrou ht the ruin of men.

No del ht of garlands or bounteous wine-cups did that man gi e me f r my portion no sweet music of flutes, the wretch or soothing rest in the ni ht and from love alas, from love he hath di vorced my days.

And here I ha e my couch uncared for whil hea y dews e er wet my hair lest I should forget that I am in the cheerless land of Troy

Erewhil bold Ajax was alway m defence against nightly t rror and the darts of the foe b t now he hath become the sacr fice of a mal gnant fate. What jo then what j y shall crown me more?

O to be wafted where the wooded sea-cape stands upon the la ing sea O to pass beneath Sunium s le el summit that so we m ht greet sacred Athens!

Enter TEUCER *f l wed by* AG MEMNON

Te Lo, I am come n ha te f r I saw the Captain of the host Agamemnon mo in h ther apace and I wot he w ll not bridle per erse l ps.

Ag memno So t thou, they t ll me who ha t dared to open thy mouth with su h blustering aga nst us—and hast yet to sma t f r t? Yea I mean thee—thee the capti e woman son. Belike hadst thou been bred of well born mothe h fty had been thy aunt and proud th strut when nought as thou art thou hast tood up for him who is as nought and hast owed that we came out w th no titl o sea or land to rul th Greeks or thee no, as chief in his own ri ht thou sayest sailed Ajax forth

Are not these presumptuous taunt for us to hear f om sla es What was the ma whom thou aunt est w th such loud arroganc ? Whither went he or wher stood he where I was n t? Have th Greeks, then no othe men but h m? Methink we hall rue that day wh n w called the Greek to contest the arm of A hilles if whate e the issue we are to be denoun ed false by Teucer and f ye ne r will consent thou h defeated to ccept that doom for which most judges ga their voice b t mu t ever ssa l us somewhere with e ilings, or stab us in the dark— the losers in the race

N w where such way pre ail no law could e r be firml t bl shed if we are to thrust the htful w n ers as de and brin the rearmost to the front Nay th s must be hecked 'Ti n t the bu ly b oa l shouldered men that a e surest t need no, tis th se who pre ail in e ery fi ld A large ribbed ox is t kept trai ht on the road b a small whip. And thi remedy m thinks will st thee ere lo g if th u fail t gain so me measure of w sdom thou who, wh n the man li es no mo e b t i now a shad art so boldl insolent and g vest such li cence t thy t g Sober thys lf I sa ecall thy birth bring hith some one else—a freeborn man—who shall plead thy cause for thee before us. When

mind this wins no favour let him hold to his own thoughts as I hold to mine

Ch Speak not at length but think how thou shalt lay the man in the tomb and what thou wilt say anon for I see a foe and perchance he will come with mocking of our sorrows as evil doers use

Teu And what man of the host dost thou behold?

Ch Menelaus for whom we made this voyage

Teu I see him he is not hard to know when near

Enter MENELAÜS

Menelaus Sirrah I tell thee to bear no hand in raising yon corpse but to leave it where it lies

Teu Wherefore hast thou spent thy breath in such proud words?

Me Tis my pleasure and his who rules the host

Teu And might we hear what reason thou pretendest?

Me This—that when we had hoped we were bringing him from home to be an ally and a friend for the Greeks we found him on trial a worse than Phrygian foe who plotted death for all the host and sallied by night against us to slay with the spear and if some god had not quenched this attempt ours would have been the lot which he hath found to lie slain by an ignoble doom while he would have been living But now a god hath turned his outrage aside to fall on sheep and cattle

Wherefore there is no man so powerful that he shall entomb the corpse of Ajax no he shall be cast forth somewhere on the yellow sand and become food for the birds by the sea Then raise no storm of angry threats If we were not able to control him while he lived at least we shall rule him in death whether thou wilt or not and control him with our hands since while he lived there never was a time when he would hearken to my words

Yet tis the sign of an unworthy nature when a subject deigns not to obey those who are set over him Never can the laws have prosperous course in a city where dread hath no place nor can a camp be ruled discreetly any more if it lack the guarding force of fear and reverence Nay though a man s frame have waxed mighty he should look to fall perchance by a light blow Whoso hath fear and shame therewith be sure that he is safe but where there is licence to insult and act at will doubt not that such a State though favouring gales have sped her some day at last sinks into the depths

No let me see fear too where fear is meet established let us not dream that we can do after our desires without paying the price in our pains These things come by turns This man was once hot and insolent now tis my hour to be haughty And I warn thee not to bury him lest through that deed thou thyself shouldst come to need a grave

Ch Menelaus after laying down wise precepts do not thyself be guilty of outrage on the dead

Teu Never *friends* shall I wonder more if a low born man offends after his kind when they who are accounted of noble blood allow such scandalous words to pass their lips

Come tell me from the first once more—Sayest thou that *thou* broughtest the man hither to th Greeks as an ally found by *thee*? Sailed he not forth of his own act—as his own master? What claim hast thou to be his chief? On what ground hast thou a right to kingship of the lieges whom he brought from home? As Sparta s king thou camest not as master over us Nowhere was it laid down among thy lawful powers that thou shouldst dictate to him, any more than he to thee Under the command of others didst thou sail hither not as chief of all so that thou shouldst ever be captain over Ajax

No lord it over *them whose lord thou art* lash *them* with thy proud words but this man will I lay duly in the grave though thou forbid it—aye or thy brother chief—nor shall I tremble at thy word Twas not for thy wife s sake that Ajax came unto the war like yon toil worn drudges—no but for the oath s sake that bound him—no whit for thine he was not wont to reck of nobodies So when thou comest again bring more heralds and the Captain of the host at *thy* noise I would not turn my head while thou art the man that thou art now

Ch Such speech again in the midst of ills I love not for harsh words how just soever stin

Me The bowman methinks hath no little pride

Teu Even so tis no sordid craft that I profess

Me How thou wouldst boast wert thou given a shield!

Teu Without a shield I were a match for thee full armed

Me How dreadful the courage that inspires thy tongue!

Teu When right is with him a man s spirit may be high

Me Is it right that this my murderer should have honour?

Teu Murderer? A marvel truly if though slain thou livest

Me A god rescued me in yon man s purpose I am dead

Teu The gods have saved thee then dishonour not the gods

Me What would *I* disparage the laws of Heaven?

Teu If thou art here to forbid the burying of the dead

Me Yea of my country s foes for it is not meet.

Teu Did Ajax e er confront thee as public foe?

Me There was hate bet ixt us thou too knewest this

Teu Yea twas found that thou hadst suborned votes to rob him

Me At the hands of the judges not at mine he had that fall

Teu Thou could t put a fair face on many a furtive villainy

Me That saying tends to pain—I know for whom

Teu Not greater pain methinks than we shall inflict

Me Hear my last word—that man must not be buried

A. So thou wouldst have me allow the burial of the dead?

Od. Yes, for I too shall come to that need.

A. Truly in all things alike each man works for himself.

Od. And for whom should I work rather than for myself?

A. It must be called thy doing, then, not mine.

Od. Call it whose thou wilt, in any case thou wilt be kind.

Ag. Nay, be well assured that I would grant thee a larger boon than this. Yon man, however, as on earth, so in the shades, shall have my hatred. But thou canst do what thou wilt.

Exit [illegible]GAMEMNON

Ch. Whoso saith, Odysseus, that thou hast not [illegible] wisdom, being such as thou art, that man is [illegible].

Od. Yea, and I tell Teucer now that henceforth I am ready to be his friend—as staunch as I was once a foe. And I would join in the burying of your dead, and partake your cares, and omit no service which mortals should render to the noblest among men.

Teu. Noble Odysseus, I have only praise to give thee for thy words; and greatly hast thou belied my fears. Thou wast his deadliest foe of all the Greeks, yet thou alone hast stood by him with thy aid, and thou hast found no heart in this presence, to heap the insults of the living on the dead—like yon crazed chief that came hither and his brother, who would have cast forth the outraged corpse without burial. Therefore may the Father supreme in the heaven above us, and the remembering Fury, and Justice that brings the end, destroy those evil men with evil doom, even as they sought to cast forth this man with unmerited despite.

But, son of aged Laertes, I scruple to admit thy [illegible] hand in these funeral rites, lest so I do displeasure to the dead; in all else be thou indeed our fellow worker, and if thou wouldst bring any man of the host, we shall make thee welcome. For the rest, I will make all things ready; and know that to us thou hast been a generous friend.

Od. It was my wish; but if it is not pleasing to thee that I should assist here, I accept thy decision, and depart.

Exit ODYSSEUS

Teu. Enough; already the delay hath been long drawn out. Come, haste some of you to dig the hollow grave; place some the high-set caldron girt with fire, in readiness for holy ablution; and let another band bring the body-armour from the tent.

And thou, too, child, with such strength as thou hast, lay lovingly thy hand upon thy sire, and help me to uplift this prostrate form; for still the warm channels are spouting upward their dark tide.

Come, each one here who owns the name of friend, haste away, in service to this man of perfect prowess; and never yet was service rendered to a nobler among men.

Ch. Many things shall mortals learn by seeing; but, before he sees, no man may read the future, or his fate.

thou speakest I can take the sense no more I understand not thy barbarian speech

Ch Would that ye both could learn the wisdom of a temperate mind! No better counsel could I give you twain

Teu Ah gratitude to the dead—in what quick sort it falls away from men and is found a traitor if this man hath no longer the slightest tribute of remembrance for thee Ajax—he for whom thou didst toil so often putting thine own life to the peril of the spear! No— tis all forgotten all flung aside!

Man who but now hast spoken many words and vain hast thou no more memory of the time when ye were shut within your lines—when ye were as lost in the turning back of your battle—and he came alone and saved you—when the flames were already wrapping the decks at your ships stern and Hector was bounding high over the trench towards the vessels? Who averted that? Were these deeds not his who thou sayest nowhere set foot where thou wast not?

Would ye allow that he did his duty there? Or when another time all alone he confronted Hector in single fight—not at any man s bidding but by right of ballot for the lot which he cast in was not one to skulk behind no lump of moist earth but such as would be the first to leap lightly from the crested helm! His were these deeds and at his side was I—the slave the son of the barbarian mother

Wretch how canst thou be so blind as to rail thus? Knowst thou not that thy sire s sire was Pelops of old—a barbarian a Phrygian? That Atreus who begat thee set before his brother a most impious feast—the flesh of that brother s children? And thou thyself wert born of a Cretan mother with whom her sire found a paramour and doomed her to be food for the dumb fishes? Being such makest thou his origin a reproach to such as I am? The father from whom I sprang is Telamon who as prize for valour peerless in the host won my mother for his bride by birth a princess daughter of Laomedon and as the flower of the spoil was she given to Telamon by Alcmena s son

Thus nobly born from two noble parents could I disgrace my kinsman whom now that such sore ills have laid him low thou wouldst thrust forth without burial—yea and art not ashamed to say it? Now be thou sure of this—wheresoever ye cast this man with him ye will cast forth our three corpses also It b seems me to die in his cause before all men s eyes rather than for thy wife—or thy brother s should I say? Be prudent therefore not for my sake but for thine own also for if thou harm me thou wilt wish anon that thou hadst been a very coward ere thy rashness had been wreaked on me

Enter ODYSSEUS

Ch King Odysseus know that thou hast come in season if thou art here not to embroil but to mediate

Od What ails you friends? Far off I heard loud speech of the Atreidae over this brave man s corpse

Ag Nay King Odysseus have we not been hearing but now most shameful taunts from yonder man?

Od How was that? I can pardon a man who is reviled if he engage in words war

Ag I *had* reviled him for his deeds toward me were vile

Od And what did he unto thee that thou hast a wrong?

Ag He says that he will not leave yon corpse ungraced by sepulture but will bury it in my despite

Od Now may a friend speak out the truth and still as ever ply his oar in time with thine?

Ag Speak else were I less than sane for I count thee my greatest friend of all the Greeks

Od Listen then For the love of the gods take not the heart to cast forth this man unburied so ruthlessly and in no wise let violence prevail with thee to hate so utterly that thou shouldest trample justice under foot

To me also this man was once the worst foe in the army from the day that I became master of the arms of Achilles yet for all that he was such toward me never would I requite him with indignity or refuse to avow that in all our Greek host which came to Troy I have seen none who was his peer save Achilles It were not just then that he should suffer dishonour at thy hand tis not he tis the law of Heaven that thou wouldst hurt When a brave man is dead tis not right to do him scathe—no not even if thou hate him

Ag *Thou* Odysseus thus his champion against me?

Od I am yet hated him when I could honourably hate

Ag And shouldst thou not also set thy heel on him in death?

Od Delight not son of Atreus in gains which sully honour

Ag Tis not easy for a king to observe piety

Od But he can show respect to his friends when they counsel well

Ag A loyal man should hearken to the rulers

Od Enough the victory is thine when thou yieldest to thy friends

Ag Remember to what a man thou showest the grace

Od Yon man was erst my foe yet noble

Ag What canst thou mean? Such reverence for a dead foe?

Od His worth weighs with me far more than his enmity

Ag Nay such as thou are the unstable among men

Od Full many are friends at one time and foes anon

Ag Dost thou approve then of our making such friends?

Od 'Tis not my wont to approve a stubborn soul

Ag Thou wilt make us appear cowards this day

Od Not so but just men in the sight of all the Greeks.

mmand of Loxias, and thence make a fair begin ... by pouring libations to thy sire that brings victory withal our grasp and gives us the mastery in all that we do.

Exeunt PAEDAGOGUS *to the spectator's left* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *to the right.—Enter* ELECTRA, *from the house*

El. O thou pure sunlight and thou air earth's canopy how often have ye heard the strains of my lament the wild blows dealt against this bleeding breast when dark night fails! And my wretched couch in yonder house of woe knows well, ere now how I keep the watches of the night how often I bewail my hapless sire to whom deadly Ares gave not of his gifts in a strange land but my mother and her mate Aegisthus, cleft his head with murderous axe as woodmen fell an oak And for this no plaint bursts from any lips save mine when thou my father hath died a death so cruel and so piteous!

But never will I cease from dirge and sore lament while I look on the trembling rays of the bright stars, or on this light of day but like the nightingale slayer of her offspring I will wail without ceasing and cry aloud to all, here at the doors of my father

O home of Hades and Persephone! O Hermes of the shades! O potent Curse and ye dread daughters of the gods, Erinyes—ye who behold when a life is reft by violence when a bed is dishonoured by stealth—come, help me avenge the murder of my sire and send to me my brother for I have no more the strength to bear up alone against the load of grief that weighs me down

Enter CHORUS OF WOMEN OF MYCENAE *The following line between* ELECTRA *and the* CHORUS *are chanted responsively*

Chorus Ah Electra, child of a wretched mother why art thou ever pining thus in ceaseless lament for Agamemnon who long ago was wickedly ensnared by thy false mother's wiles, and betrayed to death by a dastardly hand? Perish the author of that deed if I may utter such a prayer!

El. Ah, noble hearted maidens, ye have come to soothe my woes. I know and feel it it escapes me not but I cannot leave this task undone or cease from mourning for my hapless sire Ah, friends whose love responds to mine in every mood leave me to rave thus—oh leave me I entreat you!

Ch. But never by laments or prayers shalt thou recall thy sire from that lake of Hades to which all must pass Nay thine is a fatal course of grief passing ever from due bounds into cureless sorrow wherein there is no deliverance from evils Say wherefore art thou enamoured of misery?

El. Foolish is the child who forgets a parent's piteous death. No, dearer to my soul is the mourner that laments for Itys, Itys, evermore that bird distraught with grief, the messenger of Zeus. Ah queen of sorrow Niobe thee I deem divine—thee who evermore weepest thy rocky tomb!

Ch. Not to thee alone of mortals, my daughter hath come sorrow which thou bearest less calmly than those within, thy kinswomen and sisters, Chrysothemis and Iphianassa who still live as he too, lives, sorrowing in a secluded youth yet happy in that this famous realm of Mycenae shall one day welcome him to his heritage when the kindly guidance of Zeus shall have brought him to this land—Orestes.

El. Yes, I wait for him with unwearied longing as I move on my sad path from day to day unwed and childless, bathed in tears, bearing that endless doom of woe but he forgets all that he has suffered and heard What message comes to me that is not belied? He is ever yearning to be with us, but though he yearns, he never resolves.

Ch. Courage my daughter courage great still in heaven is Zeus, who sees and governs all leave thy bitter quarrel to him forget not thy foes, but refrain from excess of wrath against them for Time is a god who makes rough ways smooth Not heedless is the son of Agamemnon who dwells by Crisa's pastoral shore not heedless is the god who reigns by Acheron

El. Nay the best part of life hath passed away from me in hopelessness, and I have no strength left I who am pining away without children, whom no loving champion shields but like some despised alien I serve in the halls of my father clad in this mean garb and standing at a meagre board

Ch. Piteous was the voice heard at his return and piteous, as thy sire lay on the festal couch when the straight swift blow was dealt him with the blade of bronze Guile was the plotter Lust the slayer dread parents of a dreadful shape whether it was mortal that wrought therein or god.

El. O that bitter day bitter beyond all that have come to me O that night O the horrors of that unutterable feast the ruthless death strokes that my father saw from the hands of twain who took my life captive by treachery who doomed me to woe! May the great god of Olympus give them sufferings in requital, and never may their splendour bring them joy who have done such deeds!

Ch. Be advised to say no more canst thou not see what conduct it is which already plunges thee so cruelly in self made miseries? Thou hast greatly aggravated thy troubles, ever breeding wars with thy sullen soul but such strife should *not* be pushed to a conflict with the strong

El. I have been forced to it forced by dread causes I know my own passion it escapes me not but seeing that the causes are so dire I will never curb these frenzied plaints, while life is in me. Who indeed, ye kindly sisterhood who that thinks *aright*, would deem that any word of solace could avail me? Forbear forbear my comforters! Such ills must be numbered with those which have no cure I can never know respite from my sorrows, or a limit to this wailing

Ch. At least it is in love like a true hearted mother that I dissuade thee from adding misery to miseries.

El. But what measure is there in my wretchedness? Say how can it be right to neglect the dead? Was that *impiety* ever born in mortal? Never may

ELECTRA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ORESTES *son of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra*
ELECTRA | CHRYSOTHEMIS *sisters of Orestes*
PAEDAGOGUS *an old man formerly the attendant of Orestes*
CLYTAEMNESTRA
AEGISTHUS
CHORUS OF WOMEN OF MYCENAE

MUTE PYLADES *son of Strophius king of Crisa the friend of Orestes A handmaid of Clytaemnestra* (l 634) *Two attendants of Orestes* (l 1123)

At Mycenae before the Palace of the Pelopidae The PAEDAGOGUS *enters on the left of the spectators accompanied by the two youths* ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Paedagogus Son of him who led our hosts at Troy of old son of Agamemnon—now thou mayest behold with thine eyes all that thy soul hath desired so long There is the ancient Argos of thy yearning —that hallowed scene whence the gad fly drove the daughter of Inachus and there Orestes is the Lycean Agora named from the wolf slaying god there on the left Hera s famous temple and in this place to which we have come deem that thou seest Mycenae rich in gold with the house of the Pelopidae there so often stained with bloodshed whence I carried thee of yore from the slaying of thy father as thy kinswoman thy sister charged me and saved thee and reared thee up to manhood to be the avenger of thy murdered sire

Now therefore Orestes and thou best of friends Pylades our plans must be laid quickly for lo already the sun s bright ray is waking the songs of the birds into clearness and the dark night of stars is spent Before then anyone comes forth from the house take counsel seeing that the time allows not of delay but is full ripe for deeds

Orestes True friend and follower how well dost thou prove thy loyalty to our house! As a steed of generous race though old loses not courage in danger but pricks his ear even so thou urgest us forward and art foremost in our support I will tell thee then what I have determined listen closely to my words and correct me if I miss the mark in aught

When I went to the Pythian oracle to learn how I might avenge my father on his murderers Phoebus gave me the response which thou art now to hear that alone and by stealth without aid of arms or numbers I should snatch the righteous vengeance of my hand Since then the god spake to us on this wise thou must go into yonder house when opportunity gives thee entrance and learn all that is passing there so that thou mayest report to us from sure knowledge Thine age and the lapse of time will prevent them from recognising thee they will never suspect who thou art with that silvered hair Let thy tale be that thou art a Phocian stranger sent by Phanoteus for he is the greatest of their allies Tell them and confirm it with thine oath that Orestes hath perished by a fatal chance hurled at the Pythian games from his rapid chariot be that the substance of thy story

We meanwhile will first crown my father s tomb as the god enjoined with drink offerings and the luxuriant tribute of severed hair then come back bearing in our hands an urn of shapely bronze—now hidden in the brushwood as I think thou knowest—so to gladden them with the false tidings that this my body is no more but has been consumed with fire and turned to ashes Why should the omen trouble me when by a feigned death I find life indeed and win renown? I trow no word is ill omened if fraught with gain Often ere now have I seen wise men die in vain report then when they return home they are held in more abiding honour as I trust that from this rumour I also shall emerge in radiant life and yet shine like a star upon my foes

O my fatherland and ye gods of the land receive me with good fortune in this journey—and ye also halls of my fathers for I come with a divine mandate to cleanse you righteously send me not dishonoured from the land but grant that I may rule over my possessions and restore my house!

Enough be it now thy care old man to go and heed thy task and we twain will go forth for so occasion bids chief ruler of every enterprise for men

Electra (*within*) Ah me ah me!

Pae Hark my son—from the doors methought came the sound of some handmaid moaning within

Or Can it be the hapless Electra? Shall we stay here and listen to her laments?

Pae No no before all else let us seek to obey the

amon men, be called the child of thy mother so shall thy baseness be most widely seen in betrayal of thy dead sire and of thy kindred

Ch. No an ry ord I entreat! For both of you the is good in what is urged— f thou Electra wouldst learn to profit by her counsel and she again by thine

Chr For my part friends, I am not wholly un used t her discourse nor should I have touched upon this theme had I not heard that she was threat ened w th a dread doom wh ch shall restr in her from her lon -de n laments.

El. Come, declare t then this terror! If thou canst tell me f au ht worse than my present lot I will resist n more.

Chr Indeed I will tell thee all that I know They purpose f thou wilt not cease from these laments, to send thee wh re thou shalt n e look upon the sunlight but pass th days in a dungeon be ond th borders of this land there to cha t thy d eary strain Bethink thee th n and do not blame me hereafter hen the blow hath fall n now is the t me to be wise

El Have th y indeed resolved t treat me thus?

Chr Assuredl whene e Aeg thus comes home

El. If that be all, th n ma h arri e w th speed!

Chr Misguided one! what dir pra er t th s

El That h may com if h hath any such ntent.

Chr That thou mayst suff r—what? Wh re re th ts

El That I may fly s fa as may be from you all.

Chr But hast thou no care for thy present life?

El Aye my lif t mar elous fa r

Chr It m ght be could t thou only learn prud ence

El Do n t tea h me to betray my friends.

Chr I do ot—b t to bend bef re the st ong

El Thu e be such flattery those a e n t m ways

Chr 'T well, howe r n t to fall by f lly

El I will fall, f need be in th cause of m sire

Chr But our father I know pa don m fo thus.

El It is fo coward to fi d peace in such max ms.

Chr So thou wilt t hea k n nd take m coun sel?

El No, enl long ma be t before I am so foolish

Chr Th I will go fo th upon mun r nd

El And whithe goest thou? To wh m bearest thou these off rings

Chr Our mot send me with f n ral libations f our si e

El How sa est thou? F r h r deadl est foe?

Chr Slain b h r own hand—so th u w uldest sa

El What fr nd hath persuaded he ? Whose wi h w this

Chr Th cause I think was som dread is n of the r t

El Gods of ou house! be y w th m —now at last!

Chr Dost thou find any en oura ment in th terror?

El If thou wouldst tell me the sion then I could ans er

Chr Nay I can tell but little of the story

El Tell what thou canst a little wor l hath often marred or made men s fortunes.

Chr 'Tis said that she beheld our sire restored to the sunlight at her side once more then h e took the sceptre—once his own but now borne by Aegisthus —and planted it at th hearth and thence a fru tful bou h sprang upward herewith the wh le land of Mycenae was overshadowed Such was the tale that I heard told by one who wa present when she de clared her dream to the Sun god More than th I know not sa e that she sent me by reason of that fear So by the gods f our house I beseech thee hearken to me and be not ru ned by f lly! For if th u repel me now thou wilt come back to eek me in thy trouble

El Nay dear s ster let n ne of these th ngs in thy hands touch the tomb for neither custom nor piety allo s thee to dedicate gifts or bring l bations to our sire from a hat ful w fe No—to the win ls w th them! or bury them deep in the earth where none of them shall e er come near h s place of rest but when she d es let her find th ese trea u es laid up f r her belo w

And were sh e not the most hard ned ll women she would never ha e so ght to pour these off r ngs of enmity on the gra e f h m whom she slew Think now if it i l kely that the dead in th tomb sho ld take these honours kindly at her h nd who ruth lessly slew him, l ke foeman an l mangled h m and for ablution w ped off th blood tain on his head? Ca t thou bel e e th t these th ngs wh ch thou br n est w ll absol e her f t e m der?

It s n t possible N y cast these t ngs aside gi e h m rather lock cut f om th n own tr sses, and on my part hapless that I am—scant g fts these but my best—this hair not glossy w th unguent and th girdl decked with no r h orname t Then fall down nd pray that he himself may come in k nd ness from the w rld below to aid s a nst o r foes and that th un O estes may live t et h foot upon his foes n v cto us m ht that h ncef rth w may crown our fathe s tomb with wealthi r hand than those wh ch gra st now

I th nk indeed I think that h also had some part in sending h r these appallin dreams st ll sister do this ser ce to h lp th self a d me and him that most belo ed of all men wh rests in th realm f H des, thy s e d mine

Ch The m d n eou sel p ou l and th u f end it do he b dd n if th u art w se

Chr I w ll Whe a duty clea reason f bids that tw oices sho ld o tend and la ms th has ten ng of the d ed Onl when I attempt this t sk aid m w th you sil nc f nt eat you my frie d f r sh uld my m ther hear of t meth nk I hall y t ha e ause to rue my entu e *Exit*

Ch If I am not an erring seer and one who fa ls n w sdom I sti that hath sent the presage w ll c me t umphant n her r hteous strength will come re lo g my child to a enge There s cour

I have praise of such never when my lot is cast in pleasant places may I cling to selfish ease or dishonour my sire by restraining the wings of shrill lamentation!

For if the hapless dead is to lie in dust and nothingness *while the slayers pay not with blood for blood* all regard for man all fear of heaven will vanish from the earth

Ch I came my child in zeal for thy welfare no less than for mine own but if I speak *not well then* be it as thou wilt for we will follow thee

El I am ashamed my friends if ye deem me too impatient for my oft complaining but since a hard constraint forces me to this bear with me How indeed could any woman of noble nature refrain who saw the calamities of a father s house as I see them by day and night continually not fading but in the summer of their strength? I who first from the mother that bore me have found bitter enmity next in mine own home I dwell with my father s murderers they rule over me and with them it rests to give or to withhold what I need

And then think what *manner of days I pass* when I see Aegisthus sitting on my father s throne wearing the robes which he wore and pouring libations at the hearth where he slew my sire and when I see the outrage that crowns all the murderer in our father s bed at our wretched mother s side if mother she should be called who is his wife but so hardened is she that she lives with that accursed one fearing no Erinys nay as if exulting in her deeds having found the day on which she treacherously slew my father of old she keeps it with dance and song and month by month sacrifices sheep to the gods who have wrought her deliverance

But I hapless one beholding it weep and pine in the house and bewail the unholy feast named after my sire weep to myself alone since I may not even indulge my grief to the full measure of my yearning For this woman in professions so noble loudly upbraids me with such taunts as these Impious and hateful girl hast thou alone lost a father and is *there no other mourner in the world? An* evil doom be thine and may the gods infernal give thee no riddance from thy present laments

Thus she insults save when any one brings her word that Orestes is coming then infuriated she comes up to me and cries Hast not *thou* brought *this upon me? Is not this deed thine who didst steal* Orestes from my hands and privily convey him forth? Yet be sure that thou shalt have thy due reward So she shrieks and aiding her the renowned spouse at her side is vehement in the same strain—that abject dastard that utter pest who fights his battles with the help of women But I looking ever for Orestes to come and end these woes languish in my misery Always intending to strike a blow he has worn out every *hope that* I could conceive In such a case then friends there is no room for moderation or for reverence in sooth the stress of ills leaves no choice but to follow evil ways

Ch Say is Aegisthus near while thou speakest thus or absent from home?

El Absent certainly do not think that I should have come to the doors if he had been near but just now he is a field

Ch Might I converse with thee more freely if this is so?

El He is not here so put thy question what wouldst thou?

Ch I *ask thee then what sayest thou of thy* brother? Will he come soon or is he delaying? I fain would know

El He promises to come but he never fulfils the promise

Ch Yea a man will pause on the verge of a great work

El And yet I saved *him* without pausing

Ch Courage he is too noble to fail his friends

El I believe it or I should not have lived so long

Ch Say no more now for I see thy sister coming from the house Chrysothemis daughter of the same sire and mother with sepulchral gifts in her hands *such as are given to those in the world below*

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS

Chrysothemis Why sister hast thou come forth once more to declaim thus at the public doors? Why wilt thou not learn with any lapse of time to desist from vain indulgence of idle wrath? Yet this I know—that I myself am grieved at our plight indeed could I find the strength I would show what love I bear them But now in these troubled waters tis best methinks to shorten sail I care not to seem a tive without the power to hurt And would that thine own conduct were the same! Nevertheless right is on the side of thy choice not of that which I *advise but if I am to live in freedom our rulers* must be obeyed in all things

El Strange indeed that thou the daughter of such a sire as thine shouldst forget him and think only of thy mother! All thy admonitions to me have been taught by her no word is thine o n Then take thy choice—to be imprudent or prudent but forgetful of thy friends thou who hast just said that couldst thou find the strength thou wouldst show thy hatred of them yet wh n I am *doing my* utmost to avenge my sire thou givest no aid but seekest to turn thy sister from her deed

Does not this crown our miseries with cowardice? *For tell me—or let me tell thee—what I should gain* by ceasing from these laments? Do I not li e?—m erably I know yet well enough for me And I ex *them* thus rendering honour to the dead if pleasure can be felt in that world But thou who tellest me of thy *hatred* hatest in word alone while in deeds thou art with the slayers of thy sire I then would never yield to them though I were promi ed the gifts which now make thee proud thine be the *richly spread* table and the life of luxury For me be it food enough that I do not wound mine own conscience I covet not such privilege as thine—nor wouldst thou wert thou wise But now when thou mightest be called daughter of the noblest father

as is her type? Thinkest thou not that she would go forward to any deed without shame?

El. Now be assured that I do feel shame for this, though thou believe it not; I know that my behaviour is unseemly, and becomes me ill. But then the enmity on thy part, and thy treatment, compel me in mine own despite to do thus; for base deeds are taught by base.

Cl. Thou brazen one! Truly I and my sayings and my deeds give thee too much matter for words.

El. The words are thine, not mine; for thine is the action; and the acts find the utterance.

Cl. Now by our lady Artemis, thou shalt not fail to rue this boldness, so soon as Aegisthus returns.

El. Lo, thou art transported by anger, after granting me free speech, and hast no patience to listen.

Cl. Now wilt thou not hush thy clamour, or even suffer me to sacrifice, when I have permitted *thee* to speak unchecked?

El. I hinder not,—begin thy rites, I pray thee; and blame not my voice, for I shall say no more.

Cl. Raise then, my handmaid, the offerings of many fruits, that I may uplift my prayers to this our king, for deliverance from my present fears. Lend now a gracious ear, O Phoebus our defender, to my words, though they be dark; for I speak not among friends, nor is it meet to unfold my whole thought to the light, while *she* stands near me, lest with her malice and her garrulous cry she spread some rash rumour throughout the town: but hear me thus, since on this wise I must speak.

That vision which I saw last night in doubtful dreams—if it hath come for my good, grant, Lycean king, that it be fulfilled; but if for harm, then let it recoil upon my foes. And if any are plotting to hurl me by treachery from the high estate which now is mine, permit them not; rather vouchsafe that, still living thus unscathed, I may bear sway over the house of the Atreidae and this realm, sharing prosperous days with the friends who share them now, and with those of my children from whom no enmity or bitterness pursues me.

O Lycean Apollo, graciously hear these prayers, and grant them to us all, even as we ask! For the rest, though I be silent, I deem that thou, a god, must know it; all things, surely, are seen by the sons of Zeus.

Enter the PAEDAGOGUS.

Pae. Ladies, might a stranger crave to know if this be the palace of the king Aegisthus?

Ch. It is, sir; thou thyself hast guessed aright.

Pae. And am I right in surmising that this lady is his consort? She is of queenly aspect.

Ch. Assuredly—thou art in the presence of the queen.

Pae. Hail, royal lady! I bring glad tidings to thee and to Aegisthus, from a friend.

Cl. I welcome the omen; but I would fain know from thee, first, who may have sent thee.

Pae. Phanoteus the Phocian, on a weighty mission.

Cl. What is it, sir? Tell me: coming from a friend, thou wilt bring, I know, a kindly message.

Pae. Orestes is dead; that is the sum.

El. Oh, miserable that I am! I am lost this day!

Cl. What sayest thou, friend, what sayest thou?—listen not to her!

Pae. I said, and say again—Orestes is dead.

El. I am lost, hapless one! I am undone!

Cl. (*to* ELECTRA) See thou to thine own concerns. But do thou, sir, tell me exactly,—how did he perish?

Pae. I was sent for that purpose, and will tell thee all. Having gone to the renowned festival, the pride of Greece, for the Delphian games, when he heard the loud summons to the foot-race which was first to be decided, he entered the lists, a brilliant form, a wonder in the eyes of all there; and, having finished his course at the point where it began, he went out with the glorious meed of victory. To speak briefly, where there is much to tell, I know not the man whose deeds and triumphs have matched his; but one thing thou must know; in all the contests that the judges announced, he bore away the prize; and men deemed him happy, as oft as the herald proclaimed him an Argive, by name Orestes, son of Agamemnon, who once gathered the famous armament of Greece.

Thus far, 'twas well; but, when a god sends harm, not even the strong man can escape. For, on another day, when chariots were to try their speed at sunrise, he entered, with many charioteers. One was an Achaean, one from Sparta, two masters of yoked cars were Libyans; Orestes, driving Thessalian mares, came fifth among them; the sixth from Aetolia, with chestnut colts; a Magnesian was the seventh; the eighth, with white horses, was of Aenian stock; the ninth, from Athens, built of gods; there was a Boeotian too, making the tenth chariot.

They took their stations where the appointed umpires placed them by lot and ranged *the cars*; then, at the sound of the brazen trump, they started. All shouted to their horses, and shook the reins in their hands; the whole course was filled with the noise of rattling chariots; the dust flew upward; and all, in a confused throng, plied their goads unsparingly, each of them striving to pass the wheels and the snorting steeds of his rivals; for alike at their backs and at their rolling wheels the breath of the horses foamed and smote.

Orestes, driving close to the pillar at either end of the course, almost *grazed it* with his wheel each time, and, giving rein to the trace-horse on the right, checked the horse on the inner side. Hitherto, all the chariots had escaped overthrow; but presently the Aenian's hard-mouthed colts ran away, and, swerving, as they passed from the sixth into the seventh round, dashed their foreheads against the team of the Barcaean. Other mishaps followed the first, shock on shock and crash on crash, till the whole race-ground of Crisa was strewn with the wreck of the chariots.

Seeing this, the wary charioteer from Athens drew aside and paused, allowing the billow of chariots, surging in mid course, *to go by.* Orestes was dri-

age in my heart through those new tidings of the dream that breathes comfort Not forgetful is thy sire the lord of Hellas not forgetful is the two edged axe of bronze that struck the blow *of old* and slew him with foul cruelty

The Erinys of untiring feet who is lurking in her dread ambush will come as with the march and with the might of a great host For wicked ones have been fired with passion that *hurried them to a* forbidden bed to accursed bridals to a marriage stained with guilt of blood Therefore am I sure that the portent will not fail to bring woe upon the partners in crime Verily mortals cannot read the future *in fearful dreams or oracles if this vision of* the night find not due fulfilment

O chariot race of Pelops long ago source of many a sorrow what weary troubles hast thou brought upon this land! For since Myrtilus sank to rest be neath *the waves* when *a fatal and cruel hand hurled* him to destruction out of the golden car this house was never yet free from misery and violence

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA

Clytaemnestra At large *once more it seems* thou rangest for Aegisthus is not here who always kept thee at least from passing the gates to shame thy friends But now since he is absent thou takest no heed of me though thou hast said of me oft times and to many that I am a bold and lawless tyrant who insults thee and thine I am guilty of no insol ence I do but return the taunts that I often hear from thee

Thy father—this is thy constant pretext—was slain by me Yes by me—I know it well it admits of no denial for Justice slew him and not I alone—Justice whom it became thee to support hadst thou been right minded seeing that this father of thine whom thou art ever lamenting was the one man of the Greeks who had the heart to sacrifice thy sister to the gods—he the father who had not shared the mother s pangs

Come tell me now wherefore or to please whom did he sacrifice her? To please the Argives thou wilt say? Nay they had no right to slay my daughter Or if forsooth it was to screen his brother Mene laus that he slew my child was he not to pay me the penalty for that? Had not Menelaus two children who should in fairness have been taken before my daughter as sprung from the sire and mother who had caused that voyage? Or had Hades some strange desire to feast on my offspring rather than on hers? Or had that accursèd father lost all tenderness for th children of my womb while he was tender to the children of Menelaus? Was not that the part of a callous and perverse parent? *I think so* though I differ from thy judgment and so would say the dead if she could speak For myself then I view the past without dismay but if thou deemest me perverse see that thine own judgment is just be fore thou *blame thy neighbour*

El This time thou canst not say that I have done anything to provoke such words from thee But if thou wilt give me leave I fain would declare the truth in the cause alike of my dead sire and of my sister

Cl Indeed thou hast my leave and didst thou *always address me in such a tone thou wouldst be* heard without pain

El Then I will speak Thou sayest that thou hast slain my father What word could bring thee deeper shame than that whether the deed was just or not? But *I must tell thee that thy deed was not just* no thou wert drawn on to it by the wooing of the base man who is now thy spouse

Ask the huntress Artemis what sin she punished when she stayed the frequent winds at Aulis or I *will tell thee for we may not learn from her My* father—so I have heard—was once disporting him self in the grove of the goddess when his footfall startled a dappled and antlered stag he shot it and chanced to utter a certain boast concerning its *slaughter Wroth thereat the daughter of Leto* de tained the Greeks that in quittance for the wild creature s life my father should yield up the life of his own child Thus it befell that she was sacrificed since the fleet had no other release homeward or to *Troy and for that cause under sore constraint* and with sore reluctance at last he slew her—not for the sake of Menelaus

But grant—for I will take thine own plea—grant that the motive of his deed was to benefit his brother *was that a reason for his dying by thy hand?* Under what law? See that in making such a law for men thou make not trouble and remorse for thyself for if we are to take blood for blood thou wouldst be the first to die didst thou meet with thy desert

But look if thy pretext is not false For tell me if thou wilt wherefore thou art now doing the most shameless deeds of all—dwelling as wife with that blood guilty one who first helped thee to slay my sire and bearing children to him while thou hast cast out the earlier born the stainless offspring of a stainless marriage How can I praise these things? Or wilt thou say that this too is thy vengeance for thy daughter? Nay a shameful plea if so thou plead tis not well to wed an enemy for a daughter s sake

But indeed I may not even counsel thee—who shriekest that I revile my mother and truly I think that to me thou art less a mother than a mistress so wretched is the life that I live ever beset with mis eries by thee and by thy partner And that other who scarce escaped thy hand the hapless Orestes is wearing out his ill starred days in exile Often hast thou charged me with rearing him to punish thy crime and I would have done so if I could thou mayst be sure for that matter denounce me to all *as disloyal if thou wilt or petulant or impudent* for if I am accomplished in such ways methinks I am no unworthy child of thee

Ch I see that she breathes forth anger but whether justice be with her for this she seems to care no longer

Cl And what manner of care do I need to use against her who hath thus insulted a mother and

this at her ripe age? Thinkest thou not that she would go forward to any deed w thout shame?

El Now be ssured that I do feel shame for this thou h thou beli e it n t I kn that my behav iour is unseemly and becomes me ill But then the enmity on thy part and thy treatment compel me in mine own despite to do thus f r base deeds are taught by base.

Cl Thou brazen one! Truly I and my say ngs and my deeds give thee too much matter f r wo ds.

El The o ds re thine not mine f r thine is the action and the acts find th uttera ce.

Cl Now by our lady A temis, thou shalt not fail to pay fo this boldness, so soon as Aegisthus retu ns.

El Lo, thou art tra sported by ang r It r grant in me free peech and hast no pat ence to listen

Cl Now wilt thou n t hush thy clam ur or e en suffer *m* to sacrifice when I have permitted *thee* to speak unchecked?

El I h nder not—begin thy rites, I pray thee and blame not my oice for I shall say no m re

Cl Raise then, my handma d the offerings of many fruits, that I may uplift my prayers to th s our king fo deli ra c f m my p es nt fears Lend now a grac us ear O Phoebus our def nd r t my o ds, thou h they be dark f r I speak not among friends, n r i it meet to u f ld my whole tho ght t th li ht while *she* tands ear me lest with her malice nd he garrulous cry she pread some rash rumour thr u h ut the t wn but hear m thus, since on this wise I mu t speak.

That iso wh ch I saw la t n ght in do btful dream—if it hath co ne f r my good gra t Ly cean kin that it be f lfilled but f f ha m then let it recoil pon my foes. And if any are plott n to hurl me by treach ry from th high estate wh ch w is mine, pe m t them not rath r o hsafe that, st ll h g thus unscathed I may bea sw y ove th house of the At eid e a d th realm har ing prosperous days w th the f ds ho ha e them now nd th those f my chil n fr m whom no enmity or b tterness purs es m

O Ly ea Apoll grac o ly hea these pray rs and g ant them t us all, e en we a k! F r the rest, though I be sile t I deem that th u a god must k ow t all things, s ely at see by th so s of Zeus.

Enter the ED GOGU

Pae Ladies, might a ra r era to know if this be th pala f the king Aeg sthus?

Ch It is, sir thou thyself hast g essed a ght

Pae And am I right n urm s g that this lady is hi nsort? Sh f ju ly spect.

Ch Assuredly thou art in the prese e of the q een.

Pae Hail ro al lady! I bri g glad t d ngs t thee nd to Aegisth s, fr m frie d

Cl I lom th m b t I w uld fa n k ow from thee first ho m y ha e se t th

Pae Phanoteus th Phocia w ghty m ss n

Cl What t ? T ll m ming from friend thou ult bring I know kindly messag

Pae Orestes is dead that is the sum

El Oh miserable that I am! I am lost this day!

Cl What sayest thou friend what sayest thou?—listen not to her!

Pae I sa d and say aga n—Orestes is dead

El I am lost hapless one I am undone!

Cl (*to* EL CTRA) See thou to thine own concerns. But do thou sir tell me exactly—how d d he perish?

Pae I was sent f r that purpose and will tell thee all Ha ing gone to the renowned festi al the pride of Greece for the Delphian games when he heard the loud summons to the foot race wh ch was first to be decided he entered the l sts, a br lliant form a wonder in the e es of all there a d hav ng fin hed his course at the point where it began he went out with the glo ious meed of victory To speak briefly whe there is much to tell I know not the man whose deeds a d triumphs ha e matched his but one th ng thou must k ow in all the contests that the judges a nounced he bore away the prize and men d emed h m happy as oft as the h rald proclaimed him an Arg ve by name Orestes, son of Agamem on who o ce gathered the famous arma ment f Greece

Thus far twas well but when a god sends harm not e en the strong man can escape For on an other d y when cha ots were to try their speed at sunrise he ntered w th ma y charioteers. One was an Achaean one from Sparta tw masters f yoked cars w re Libyans Orestes dr i Thessalian mares, came fifth amo them the sixth from Aetolia with chestnut c lts a Magnesi n was the e enth the e ghth with white horses, was of Aenian stock the nth from Athens, bu lt f gods there was a Boeotian too makin the tenth chari t

Th y took the r t tio s whe the appointed um pires placed th m by l t and ranged the cars then at th so nd f th brazen trump th y started All ho ted to thei horses a d shook the reins in their ha d the wh le c urse was filled with the no se of rattl g cha i ts the d t flew upward a d ll in a confused th on pl ed th ei goads un pari gly each of th m t i g to pa th whe ls d th snort ing teeds of his r al f r al ke at th r backs and at th ir lli g h ls the b eath of the horses foamed nd m te

O estes dri ing close to the pillar at eith r end of the c urse lmost grazed it w th h s wheel each t me nd g ing n to the trac horse on the r ght, h cked the h rse n the inner s de Hitherto all the ha t had escaped o erthrow b t p ese tly the A ia s hard m thed c lts ran away nd swerv as they passed from the sixth into the se enth r nd d hed th ir f heads ag t the team f the B ean Other m shaps f llowed the first shock n shock d cra h n crash t ll the wh le race g u d of Crisa was str wn with the w eck f the chari t

See g th s, th wary ch rioteer from Athen d ew aside and pau ed ll w g the bill w of chariots su gin in mid c urse to g by Orestes was dri i g

last keeping his horses behind for his trust was in the end but when he saw that the Athenian was alone left in he sent a shrill cry ringing through the ears of his swift colts and gave chase Team was brought level with team and so they raced—first one man then the other showing his head in front of the chariots

Hitherto the ill fated Orestes had passed safely through every round steadfast in his steadfast car at last slackening his left rein while the horse was turning unawares he struck the edge of the pillar he broke the axle box in twain he was thrown over the chariot rail he was caught in the shapely reins and as he fell on the ground his colts were scattered into the middle of the course

But when the people saw him fallen from the car a cry of pity went up for the youth who had done such deeds and was meeting such a doom—now dashed to earth now tossed feet uppermost to the sky—till the charioteers with difficulty checking the career of his horses loosed him so covered with blood that no friend who saw it would have known the hapless corpse Straightway they burned it on a pyre and chosen men of Phocis are bringing in a small urn of bronze the sad dust of that mighty form to find due burial in his fatherland

Such is my story—grievous to hear if words can grieve but for us who beheld the greatest of sorrows that these eyes have seen

Ch Alas alas! Now methinks the stock of our ancient masters hath utterly perished root and branch

Cl O Zeus what shall I call these tidings—glad tidings? Or dire but gainful? 'Tis a bitter lot when mine own calamities make the safety of my life

Pae Why art thou so downcast lady at this news?

Cl There is a strange power in motherhood a mother may be wronged but she never learns to hate her child

Pae Then it seems that we have come in vain

Cl Nay not in vain how canst thou say in vain when thou hast brought me sure proofs of his death? His who sprang from mine own life yet forsaking me who had suckled and reared him became an exile and an alien and after he went out of this land he saw me no more but charging me with the murder of his sire he uttered dread threats against me so that neither by night nor by day could sweet sleep cover mine eyes but from moment to moment I lived in fear of death Now however—since this day I am rid of terror from him and from this girl that worse plague who shared my home while still she drained my very life blood—now methinks for aught that she can threaten I shall pass my days in peace

El Ah woe is me! Now indeed Orestes thy fortune may be lamented, when it is thus with thee and thou art mocked by this thy mother! Is it not well?

Cl Not with thee but his state is well

El Hear Nemesis of him who hath lately died!

Cl She hath heard who should be heard and hath ordained well

El Insult us for this is the time of thy triumph

Cl Then will not Orestes and thou silence me?

El We are silenced much less should we silence thee

Cl Thy coming sir would deserve large recompense if thou hast hushed her clamorous tongue

Pae Then I may take my leave if all is well

Cl Not so thy welcome would then be unworthy of me and of the ally who sent thee Nay come thou in and leave her without to make loud lament for herself and for her friends

CLYTAEMNESTRA *and the* PAEDAGOGUS *enter the house*

El How think ye? Was there not grief and anguish there wondrous weeping and wailing of that miserable mother for the son who perished by such a fate? Nay she left us with a laugh! Ah woe is me! Dearest Orestes how is my life quenched by thy death! Thou hast torn away with thee from my heart the only hopes which still were mine—that thou wouldst live to return some day an avenger of thy sire and of me unhappy But now—whither shall I turn? I am alone bereft of thee as of my father

Henceforth I must be a slave again among those whom most I hate my father's murderers Is it not well with me? But never at least henceforward will I enter the house to dwell with them nay at these gates I will lay me down and here without a friend my days shall wither Therefore if any in the house be wroth let them slay me for 'tis a grace if I die but if I live a pain I desire life no more

Ch Where are the thunderbolts of Zeus or where is the bright Sun if they look upon these things and brand them not but rest?

El Woe woe ah me ah me!

Ch O daughter why weepest thou?

El (*with hands outstretched to heaven*) Alas!

Ch Utter no rash cry!

El Thou wilt break my heart!

Ch How meanest thou?

El If thou suggest a hope concerning those who have surely passed to the realm below thou wilt trample yet more upon my misery

Ch Nay I know how ensnared by a woman for a chain of gold the prince Amphiaraus found a grave and now beneath the earth—

El Ah me ah me!

Ch —he reigns in fulness of force

El Alas!

Ch Alas indeed! for the murderess—

El Was slain

Ch Yea

El I know it I know it for a champion arose to avenge the mourning dead but to me no champion remains for he who yet was left hath been snatched away

Ch Hapless art thou and hapless is thy lot!

El Well know I that too well I whose life is a torrent of woes dread and dark a torrent that surges through all the months!

Ch We have seen the course of thy sorrow

El. Cease then to desert me from it when no ...

Ch. How sayest thou?

El. —when no more can I have the comfort of love from a brother the seed of the same ... ble sire.

Ch. For all men it ... ppointed to d...

El. Wh... to die as that ill-starred one died ... the tramp of racing steeds, entangled in the reins ... ma dragged him?

Ch. Cruel was his doom, beyond thought!

El. Yea, ... hen in foreign soil without the ... ministry of my hand —

Ch. Alas!

El. —he buried ... not by me with sepulture ... or ... tears.

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ch. Joy ... my feet, dear ... not careful ... seemliness, if I come with speed, for I bring joyful news, to ... the long sufferings and sorrows.

El. And ... nce couldst thou find help for my woes, whereof ... cure can be imagined?

Ch. Orestes is with us—know this from my lips—in presence as surely as thou seest me here.

El. What art thou mad, poor girl? Art thou ... at my sorrows, and thine own?

Ch. ... by our father's hearth, I speak not in mockery. I tell thee that he is with us indeed.

El. Ah, woe is me! And from whom hast thou heard ... which thou believest so lightly?

Ch. I be... ... on mine own knowledge, not on hearsay. I have seen clear proofs.

El. What hast thou seen, poor girl, to warrant thy belief? Whither, I wonder, hast thou turned thine eyes, that thou art fevered with this baleful fire?

Ch. Then, for the gods' love, listen, that thou mayest know my story before deciding whether I am sane or foolish.

El. Speak on, then, if thou findest pleasure in speaking.

Ch. Well, thou shalt hear all that I have seen. When I came to our father's ancient tomb, I saw that streams of milk had lately flowed from the top of the mound, and that his sepulchre was encircled with ... of all flowers that blow. I was astonished at the sight, and peered about lest haply some one should be close to my side. But when I perceived that all the place was in stillness, I crept nearer to the tomb; and on the mound's edge I saw a lock of hair, freshly severed.

And the moment that I saw it, ah me, a familiar image rushed upon my soul, telling me that there I beheld a token of him whom most I love, Orestes. Then I took it in my hands, and uttered no ill-omened word, but the tears of joy straightway filled my eyes. And I know well, as I knew then, that this fair tribute has come from none but him. Whose part else was that, save mine and thine? And I did it not, I know, nor thou; how shouldst thou?—when thou canst not leave this house, even to worship the gods, but at thy peril. Nor again does our mother's heart incline to do such deeds, nor could she have so done without our knowledge.

No, these offerings are from Orestes! Come, dear sister, courage! No mortal fares attended by a changeless fortune. Ours was once gloomy, but this day, perchance, will seal the promise of much good.

El. Alas for thy folly! How I have been pitying thee!

Ch. What, are not my tidings welcome?

El. Thou knowest not whither or into what dreams thou wanderest.

Ch. Should I not know what mine own eyes have seen?

El. He is dead, poor girl; and thy hopes in that deliverer are gone: look not to him.

Ch. Woe, woe is me! From whom hast thou heard this?

El. From the man who was present when he perished.

Ch. And where is he? Wonder steals over my mind.

El. He is within, a guest not unpleasing to our mother.

Ch. Ah, woe is me! Whose, then, can have been those ample offerings to our father's tomb?

El. Most likely, I think, some one brought those gifts in memory of the dead Orestes.

Ch. Oh, hapless that I am! And I was bringing such news in joyous haste, all unaware, it seems, how deep was our plight; but now that I have come, I find fresh sorrows added to the old!

El. So stands thy case; but if thou wilt hearken to me, thou wilt lighten the load of our present trouble.

Ch. Can I ever raise the dead to life?

El. I meant not that; I am not so foolish.

Ch. What biddest thou, then, for which my strength avails?

El. That thou be brave in doing what I enjoin.

Ch. Nay, if any good can be done, I will not refuse.

El. Remember, nothing succeeds without toil.

Ch. I know it, and will share thy burden with all my power.

El. Hear, then, how I am resolved to act. As for the support of friends, thou thyself must know that we have none; Hades hath taken our friend away, and we two are left alone. I, so long as I heard that my brother still lived and prospered, had hopes that he would yet come to avenge the murder of our sire. But now that he is no more, I look next to thee, not to flinch from aiding me thy sister to slay our father's murderer, Aegisthus: I must have no secret from thee more.

How long art thou to wait inactive? What hope is left standing, to which thine eyes can turn? Thou hast to complain that thou art robbed of thy father's heritage; thou hast to mourn that thus far thy life is fading without nuptial song or wedded love. Nay, and do not hope that such joys will ever be thine; Aegisthus is not so ill-advised as ever to permit that children should spring from thee or me for his own sure destruction. But if thou wilt follow my counsels, first thou wilt win praise of piety from our

dead sire below and from our brother too next *thou shalt* be called free henceforth as thou wert born and shalt find worthy bridals for noble natures draw the gaze of all

Then seest thou not what fair fame thou wilt win for thyself and for me by hearkening to my word? What citizen or stranger when he sees us will not greet us with praises such as these?— Behold these two sisters my friends who saved their father s house who when their foes were firmly planted of yore took their lives in their hands and stood forth as avengers of blood! Worthy of love are these *twain worthy of reverence from all at festivals* and wherever the folk are assembled let these be honoured of all men for their prowess Thus will every one speak of us so that in life and in death our glory shall not fail

Come dear sister hearken! Work with thy sire share the burden of thy brother win rest from woes for me and for thyself—mindful of this that an ignoble life brings shame upon the noble

Ch In such case as this forethought is helpful for those who speak and those who hear

Chr Yea and before she spake my friends were she blest with a sound mind she would have remembered caution as she doth not remember it

Now whither canst thou have turned thine eyes that thou art arming thyself with such rashness and calling me to aid thee? Seest thou not thou art a *woman not a man and no match for thine adver*saries in strength? And their fortune prospers day by day while ours is ebbing and coming to nought Who then plotting to vanquish a foe so strong shall escape without suffering deadly scathe? See that we change not our evil plight to worse if any one hears these words It brings us no relief or benefit if after winning fair fame we die an ignominious death for mere death is not the bitterest but rather when one who craves to die cannot obtain even that boon

Nay I beseech thee before we are utterly destroyed and leave our house desolate restrain thy rage! I will take care that thy words remain secret and harmless and learn thou the prudence at last though late of yielding when so helpless to thy rulers

Ch Hearken there is no better gain for mortals to win than foresight and a prudent mind

El Thou hast said nothing unlooked for I well knew that thou wouldst reject what I proffered Well! I must do this deed with mine own hand and alone for assuredly I will not leave it void

Chr Alas! Would thou hadst been so purposed on the day of our father s death! What mightst thou not have wrought?

El My nature was the same then but my mind less ripe

Chr Strive to keep such a mind through all thy life

El These counsels mean that thou wilt not share my deed

Chr No for the venture is likely to bring disaster

El I admire thy prudence thy cowardice I hate

Chr I will listen not less calmly when thou praise me

El Never fear to suffer that from me

Chr Time enough in the future to decide that

El Begone there is no power to help in thee.

Chr Not so but in thee no mind to learn

El Go declare all this to thy mother!

Chr But again I do not hate thee with such a hate

El Yet know at least to what dishonour thou *bringest me*

Chr Dishonour no! I am only thinking of thy good

El Am I bound then to follow thy rule of right?

Chr When thou art wise then thou shalt be our guide

El Sad that one who speaks so well should speak amiss!

Chr Thou hast well described the fault to which thou cleavest

El How? Dost thou not think that I speak with justice?

Chr But sometimes justice itself is fraught with harm

El I care not to live by such a law

Chr Well if thou must do this thou wilt praise me yet

El And do it I will no whit dismayed by thee

Chr Is this so indeed? Wilt thou not change thy counsels?

El No for nothing is more hateful than bad counsel

Chr Thou seemest to agree with nothing that I urge

El My resolve is not new but long since fixed

Chr Then I will go thou canst not be brought to approve my words nor I to commend thy conduct

El Nay go within never will I follow thee however much thou mayst desire it it were great folly even to attempt an idle quest

Chr Nay if thou art wise in thine own eyes be such wisdom thine by and by when thou standest in evil plight thou wilt praise my words *Exit*

Chorus

When we see the birds of the air with sure instinct careful to nourish those who give them life and nurture why do not we pay these debts in like measure? Nay by the lightning flash of Zeus by Themis throned in heaven it is not long till sin *brings sorrow*

Voice that comest to the dead beneath the earth send a piteous cry I pray thee to the son of Atreus in that world a joyless message of dishonour

tell him that the fortunes of his house are now dis*tempered while among his children strife* of sister with sister hath broken the harmony of loving days Electra forsaken braves the storm alone she bewails alway hapless one her father s fate like the

nd while unwearied in lament she recks not of death, but is ready to leave the sunlight could she but quell the two Furies of her house. Who shall match such noble child of noble sire?

No generous soul deigns, by a base life, to cloud a fair repute and leave a name inglorious as thou, too, O my daughter hast chosen to mourn all thy days with those that mourn and hast spurned dishonour that thou mightest win at once a twofold praise, as wise and as the best of daughters.

May I yet see thy life raised in might and wealth above thy foes, even as now it is humbled beneath their hand! For I have found thee in no prosperous estate and yet, for observance of nature's highest laws, winning the noblest renown by thy piety toward Zeus.

Enter ORESTES *with* PYLADES *and two attendants*

Or Ladies, have we been directed right and are we on the right path to our goal?

Ch And what seekest thou? With what desire hast thou come?

Or I have been searching for the home of Aegisthus.

Ch. Well, thou hast found it and thy guide is blameless.

Or Which of you, then, will tell those within that our company long desired hath arrived?

Ch. This maiden—if the nearest should announce it.

Or I pray thee mistress, make it known in the house that certain men of Phocis seek Aegisthus.

El. Ah, woe is me! Surely ye are not bringing the visible proofs of that rumour which we heard?

Or I know nothing of thy rumour but the aged Strophius hath charged me with tidings of Orestes.

El What are they, sir? Ah, how I thrill with fear!

Or He is dead and in a small urn as thou seest, we bring the scanty relics home.

El Ah me unhappy! There at last before mine eyes, I see that woful burden in your hands!

Or If thy tears are for aught which Orestes hath suffered know that yond vessel holds his dust.

El Ah sir allow me then I implore thee, if this urn indeed contains him, to take it in my hand— that I may weep and wail not for these ashes alone, but for myself and for all our house therewith!

Or (*to the attendants*) Bring it and give it her whoe'er she be for she who begs this boon must be one who wished him no evil, but a friend or haply kinswoman by blood

(*The urn is placed in* ELECTRA'S *hands*)

El Ah memorial of him whom I loved best on earth Ah Orestes, whose life hath no relic left save this,—how far from the hopes with which I sent thee forth is the manner in which I receive thee back Now I carry thy poor dust in my hands but thou wast radiant my child when I sped thee forth from home Would that I had yielded up my breath ere with these hands, I stole thee away and sent thee to a strange land and rescued thee from death that so thou mightest have been stricken down on that self same day and had thy portion in the tomb of thy sire!

But now an exile from home and fatherland thou hast perished miserably far from thy sister woe is me, these loving hands have not washed or decked thy corpse, nor taken up as was meet their sad burden from the flaming pyre. No! at the hands of strangers, hapless one thou hast had those rites, and so art come to us, a little dust in a narrow urn

Ah woe is me for my nursing long ago, so vain, that I oft bestowed on thee with loving toil! For thou wast never thy mother's darling so much as mine nor was any in the house thy nurse but I and by thee I was ever called "sister" But now all this hath vanished in a day with thy death like a whirlwind thou hast swept all away with thee Our father is gone I am dead in regard to thee thou thyself hast perished our foes exult that mother who is none is mad with joy—she of whom thou didst oft send me secret messages, thy heralds, saying that thou thyself would st appear as an avenger But our evil fortune thine and mine hath reft all that away and hath sent thee forth unto me thus—no more the form that I loved so well, but ashes and an idle shade.

Ah me ah me! O piteous dust! Alas, thou dear one, sent on a dire journey how hast undone me—undone me indeed O brother mine!

Therefore take me to this thy home me who am as nothing, to thy nothingness, that I may dwell with thee henceforth below for when thou wert on earth, we shared alike and now I fain would die, that I may not be parted from thee in the grave. For I see that the dead have rest from pain.

Ch Bethink thee Electra thou art the child of mortal sire and mortal was Orestes therefore grieve not too much. This is a debt which all of us must pay

Or Alas, what shall I say? What words can serve me at this pass? I can restrain my lips no longer!

El What hath troubled thee? Why didst thou say that?

Or Is this the form of the illustrious Electra that I behold?

El It is and very grievous is her plight.

Or Alas, then for this miserable fortune!

El Surely sir thy lament is not for me?

Or O form cruelly godlessly misused!

El. Those ill-omened words, sir fit no one better than me

Or Alas for thy life unwedded and all unblest!

El. Why this steadfast gaze stranger and these laments?

Or How ignorant was I then, of mine own sorrows!

El. By what that hath been said hast thou perceived this?

Or By seeing thy sufferings, so many and so great.

El And yet thou seest but a few of my woes.

Or Could any be more painful to behold?

El This that I share the dwelling of the murderers

Or Whose murderers? Where lies the guilt at which thou hintest?

El My father s and then I am their slave perforce

Or Who is it that subjects thee to this constraint?

El A mother—in name but no mother in her deeds

Or How doth she oppress thee? With violence or with hardship?

El With violence and hardships and all manner of ill

Or And is there none to succour or to hinder?

El None. I *had* one and thou hast shown me his ashes

Or Hapless girl how this sight hath stirred my pity!

El Know then that thou art the first who ever pitied me

Or No other visitor hath ever shared thy pain

El Surely thou art not some unknown kinsman?

Or I would answer if these were friends who hear us

El Oh they are friends thou canst speak without mistrust

Or Give up this urn then and thou shalt be told all

El Nay I beseech thee be not so cruel to me sir!

Or Do as I say and never fear to do amiss

El I conjure thee rob me not of my chief treasure!

Or Thou must not keep it

El Ah woe is me for thee Orestes if I am not to give thee burial!

Or Hush! no such word! Thou hast no right to lament

El No right to lament for my dead brother?

Or It is not meet for thee to speak of him thus

El Am I so dishonoured of the dead?

Or Dishonoured of none but this is not thy part

El Yes if these are the ashes of Orestes that I hold

Or They are not a fiction clothed them with his name

(*He gently takes the urn from her*)

El And where is that unhappy one s tomb?

Or There is none the living have no tomb

El What sayest thou boy?

Or Nothing that is not true

El The man is alive?

Or If there be life in me

El What? Art thou he?

Or Look at this signet once our father s and judge if I speak truth

El O blissful day!

Or Blissful in very deed!

El Is this thy voice?

Or Let no other voice reply

El Do I hold thee in my arms?

Or As mayest thou hold me always!

El Ah dear friends and fellow-citizens behold Orestes here who was feigned dead and now by that feigning hath come safely home!

Ch We see him daughter and for this happy fortune a tear of joy trickles from our eyes

El Offspring of him whom I loved best thou hast come even now thou hast come and found and seen her whom thy heart desired!

Or I am with thee but keep silence for a while

El What meanest thou?

Or 'Tis better to be silent lest some one within should hear

El Nay by ever-virgin Artemis I will never stoop to fear women stay at homes vain burdens of the ground!

Or Yet remember that in women too dwells the spirit of battle thou hast had good proof of that I ween

El Alas! ah me! Thou hast reminded me of my sorrow one which from its nature cannot be veiled cannot be done away with cannot forget!

Or I know this also but when occasion prompts then will be the moment to recall those deeds

El Each moment of all time as it comes would be meet occasion for these my just complaints scarcely now have I had my lips set free

Or I grant it therefore guard thy freedom

El What must I do?

Or When the season serves not do not wish to speak too much

El Nay who could fitly exchange speech for such silence when thou hast appeared? For now I have seen thy face beyond all thought and hope!

Or Thou sawest it when the gods moved me to come

* * *

El Thou hast told me of a grace above the first if a god hath indeed brought thee to our house I acknowledge therein the work of heaven

Or I am loth indeed to curb thy gladness but yet this excess of joy moves my fear

El O thou who after many a year hast deigned thus to gladden mine eyes by thy return do not now that thou hast seen me in all my woe—

Or What is thy prayer?

El —do not rob me of the comfort of thy face do not force me to forego it!

Or I should be wroth indeed if I saw another attempt it

El My prayer is granted?

Or Canst thou doubt?

El Ah friends I heard a voice that I could never have hoped to hear nor could I have restrained my emotion in silence and without a cry when I heard it

Ah me! But now I have thee thou art come to me with the light of that dear countenance which never even in sorrow could I forget

Or Spare all superfluous words tell me not of our mother s wickedness or how Aegisthus drains the wealth of our father s house by lavish luxury or

aimless waste f r the story would not suffer thee to keep due limit T ll me rath r that which will serve our present need—whe e we mu t sho v oursel es, or wa t in ambush that thus our coming may confound the triumph of our foes.

And look that our mother read not thy sec et in thy radia t face wh n we twain ha e ad anced into the h use but make lame t as for the fe ned disast r for wh n we ha e prospered then there ill be leisure to rejoice and ex lt in freedom

El Na brother as it pleases thee so shall be my c ndu t also f s all my joy is a g ft from thee nd not mine own Nor would I c nse t t w n a g eat good f r myself at the cost of the least pain to thee f r so sho ld I ill serve the di e power that befriend us now

But thou knowest how matters stand h re I doubt not tho must ha e heard that Aegisthus is from home but our m th r withi and fear not that he will e er see my fac lit up with smiles f r mine old hatred of h r hath sunk i t my heart nd since I ha e beheld thee fo ery joy I hall n e cease t weep How nd ed should I cease who have see th e come h me this day first as dead and th I f ? Strangely hast thou wrought on m so that if my fath r hould return al ve, I hould n longe doubt my senses, but sh uld be he that I saw h m. Now th efore that thou hast ome t me so wond ou ly omma d me a thou ilt fo had I bee lone I hould h e ch ed n f tw th g—a n ble delive n o n ble death

Or Thou had t best be s l nt for I hear some one w thin p pari g to go f th

El (*to o re d pyl s*) Ente s rs espe cial y as ye bri g that hi h o one could p lse from these doors, th u h he recei t without j y

Enter the PAED GOGUS

Pae Fool h nd senseless ch ld n! Are e weary f you lives, o wa the e o w t born n y that se n t bow e tand ot on th b i k b t n the ery mid t of deadly pe l ? Na had I o t kept watch th lon whil t these doo s, ou plan ld ha e been n th h u e b fo e so rsel es b t t s, my ca hu lded y u fr m that Now h don w th th long d scourse thes satiate cries ti and pass w thin t r in uch d eds d lay i e l a d t w ll to mak n end

Or Wh t then w ll be m prospe ts hen I

P C ool f t thou a t secu ed f om recog it on

Or Th u ha t po ed me I presum dead?

r K ha he e tl u art numbe ed w th the ha les

Or Do h joi e then t these t dings? Or ha sa n

I l w ll ll th t the end meanwh l all is ll f on heir part—e e that which s not ll

El Who thus, b th l I p y thee t ll me.

Or Dos hou ot percei e?

El I a ot guess.

O Knowest thou not the man to whose hands thou gavest me once?

El What man? Ho sayest thou?

Or By whose ha ds, thro gh thy forethought I wa secretly conveyed f rth to Phocian soil.

El Is th s he in whom alone of many I found a true ally of old when our sire was sla n?

O 'Tis he question me no f rther

El O joyous day! O sole preserver of Agamemnon l ous ho ha t thou come? Art thou he indeed who did t save my brother and myself from man sorrows? O dearest hands O messenger whose fe t were ki dly serv nts! How could t thou be with me so long and r ma n unknown nor give a ray of light but afflict me by fables, while possessed of truths most sweet? Ha l father—for tis a father that I seem to behold! All ha l—and know that I have hated thee and lo ed thee in one day as ne er man before!

Pae Enou h methinks as for the story of the past many are the circling nights, and days as ma y which shall show it thee Electra in its ful ness

(*To* ORESTES *and* PYLADES) But this is my counsel to you twa n wh stan l there—now is the time to act n w Cly a mnestra is alo e—no man is n w w th n but if ye pause c n der that ye will ha e to f ght not with the inmates alone but with other foes mor numerou and better skilled

O P lades th s ou task seems no longer to crave ma wo d but r ther that we should ent r the *house* f th ith—first adoring the shri es of m father s gods who keep these gates

OR ES *and* PYLADES *enter the house followed by the* PAED GOG S LECTR *rem ns* *uts* *e*

El O King Apollo! graciou ly hear them and hear m bes des who so oft hav come bef re thine altar w th such gifts as my de o t hand could bring! And n w O Lycean Apollo with s ch vows as I can mak I pray thee I s ppl cate I impl re grant us thy ben gnant a d in these des gns nd show men how impiety i rewa ded by the god !

ELECTR *enters th house*

Ch rus

Beh ld how Ares mo es onwa d breathi deadly ve geance gain t which n ne may striv !

E e now th pursu r of d rk gu lt ha e pa sed be eath on oof the ho ds wh ch none may fl e The ef the v sion of my soul shall not long tarry in suspe se

Th hamp n of the p r ts i f rnal is sh red w th tealthy feet nto the h use the ancestral pal of his sire bea ng k n ed ed death i h hands and H rmes, son of Ma ho hath shr uded th guile n dark ess leads him forward e en to the end nd delay o mor

Enter ELECTR. *f m the house*

El Ah dearest f ends, in a moment the m n will d th deed but wa t in l nce

Ch How is it? what do they now?

El She is decking the urn for burial and those two stand close to her

Ch And why hast thou sped forth?

El To guard against Aegisthus entering before we are aware

Cl (*within*) Alas! Woe for the house forsaken of friends and filled with murderers!

El A cry goes up within hear ye not friends?

Ch I heard ah me sounds dire to hear and shuddered!

Cl (*within*) O hapless that I am! Aegisthus where where art thou?

El Hark once more a voice resounds!

Cl (*within*) My son my son have pity on thy mother!

El Thou hadst none for him nor for the father that begat him

Ch Ill fated realm and race now the fate that hath pursued thee day by day is dying—is dying!

Cl (*within*) Oh I am smitten!

El Smite if thou canst once more!

Cl (*within*) Ah woe is me again!

El Would that the woe were for Aegisthus too!

Ch The curses are at work the buried live blood flows for blood drained from the slayers by those who died of yore

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES *from the house*

Behold they come! That red hand reeks with sacrifice to Ares nor can I blame the deed

El Orestes how fare ye?

Or All is well within the house if Apollo s oracle spake well

El The guilty one is dead?

Or Fear no more that thy proud mother will ever put thee to dishonour

* * *

Ch Cease for I see Aegisthus full in view

El Rash boys back back!

Or Where see ye the man?

El Yonder at our mercy he advances from the suburb full of joy

Ch Make with all speed for the vestibule that as your first task prospered so this again may prosper now

Or Fear not—we will perform it

El Haste then whither thou wouldst

Or See I am gone

El I will look to matters here

Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Ch Twere well to soothe his ear with some few words of seeming gentleness that he may rush blindly upon the struggle with his doom

Enter AEGISTHUS

Aegisthus Which of you can tell me where are those Phocian strangers who tis said have brought us tidings of Orestes slain in the wreck of his chariot? Thee thee I ask yes, thee in former days so bold—for methinks *it touches thee most nearly* thou best must know and best canst tell

El I know assuredly else were I a stranger to the fortune of my nearest kinsfolk

Aeg Where then may be the strangers? Tell me

El Within they have found a way to the heart of their hostess

Aeg Have they in truth reported him dead?

El Nay not reported only they have shown him

Aeg Can I then see the corpse with mine own eyes?

El Thou canst indeed and tis no enviable sight

Aeg Indeed thou hast given me a joyful greeting beyond thy wont

El Joy be thine if in these things thou findest joy

Aeg Silence I say and throw wide the gates for all Mycenaeans and Argives to behold that if any of them were once buoyed on empty hopes from this man now seeing him dead they may receive my curb instead of waiting till my chastisement make them wise perforce!

El No loyalty is lacking on my part time hath *taught me the prudence of concord* with the stronger

(*A shrouded corpse is disclosed* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *stand near it*)

Aeg O Zeus I behold that which hath not fallen save by the doom of jealous Heaven but if Nemesis attend that word be it unsaid!

Take all the covering from the face that kinship at least may receive the tribute of lament from me also

Or Lift the veil thyself not my part this but thine to look upon these relics and to greet them kindly

Aeg 'Tis good counsel and I will follow it (*To* ELECTRA) But thou—call me Clytaemnestra if she is within

Or Lo she is near thee turn not thine eyes elsewhere

(AEGISTHUS *removes the face cloth from the corpse*)

Aeg O what sight is this!

Or Why so scared? Is the fa e so strange?

Aeg Who are the men into whose mid toils I have fallen hapless that I am?

Or Nay hast thou not discovered ere now that the dead as thou miscallest them are living?

Aeg Alas I read the riddle this can be none but Orestes who speaks to me!

Or And though so good a *prophet* thou wast deceived so long?

Aeg Oh lost undone! Yet suffer me to say one word

El In heaven s name my brother suffer him no to speak further or to plead at length! When mortals are in the meshes of fate how can such respite avail one who is to die? No—slay him forthwith and cast his corpse to the creatures from whom such as he should have burial far from our sight! To me *nothing but this can make amends for the woes of* the past

Or (*to* AEGISTHUS) Go in and quickly the issue here is not of words but of thy life

Aeg Why take me into the house? If this deed be fair what need of darkness? Why is thy hand not prompt to strike?

Or Dictate not but go where thou didst slay my father that in the same place thou mayest die.

Aeg Is this dwelling doomed to see all woes of Pelops line now and in time to come?

Or Thine at least trust my prophetic skill so far

Aeg The skill thou vauntest belonged not to thy sire.

Or Thou bandiest words, and our going is delayed. Move forward!

Aeg Lead thou.

Or Thou must go first

Aeg Lest I escape thee?

Or No, but that thou mayest not choose how to die I must not spare thee any bitterness of death. And well it were if this judgment came straightway upon all who dealt in lawless deeds, even the judgment of the sword so should not wickedness abound

ORESTES *and* PYLADES *drive* AEGISTHUS *into the palace*

Ch O house of Atreus, through how many sufferings hast thou come forth at last in freedom crowned with good by this day's enterprise!

TRACHINIAE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Deianeira	Lichas *the herald of Heracles*
Nurse	Heracles
Hyllus *son of Heracles and Deianeira*	An Old Man
Messenger	Chorus of Trachinian Maidens

At Trachis before the house of Heracles Enter DEIANEIRA *from the hou e accompanied by the* NUR E

Deianeira There is a saying among men put forth of old that thou canst not rightly judge whether a mortal s lot is good or evil ere he die But I even before I have passed to the world of death know well that my life is sorrowful and bitter I who in the house of my fath r Oeneus while yet I dwelt at Pleuron had such fear of bridals as never vexed any maiden of Aetolia For my wooer was a river god Achelous who in three shapes was ever asking me from my sire—coming now as a bull in bodily form now as a serpent with sheeny coils now with trunk of man and front of ox while from a shaggy beard the streams of fountain water flowed abroad With the fear of such a suitor before mine eyes I was always praying in my wretchedness that I might die or ever I should come near to such a bed

But at last to my joy came the glorious son of Zeus and Alcmena who closed with him in combat and delivered me How th fight was waged I cannot clearly tell I know not if there be any one who watched that sight without terror such might speak I as I sat there was distraught with dread lest beauty should bring me sorrow at the last But finally the Zeus of battles ordained well—if well indeed it be for since I have been joined to Heracles as his chosen bride fear after fear hath haunted me on his account one night brings a trouble and the next night in turn drives it out And then children were born to us whom he has seen only as the husbandman sees his distant field which he visits at seed time and once again at harvest Such was the life that kept him journeying to and fro in the service of a certain master

But now when he hath risen above those trials now it is that my anguish is sorest Ever since he slew the valiant Iphitus we have been dwelling here in Trachis exiles from our home and the guests of a stranger but where he is no one knows I only know that he is gone and hath pierced my heart with cruel pan s for him I am almost sure that some evil hath befallen him it is no short space that hath passed but ten long months and then five more—and still no message from him Yes there has been some dread mischance witness that tablet which he left with me ere he went forth oft do I pray to the gods that I may not have received it for my sorrow

Nurse Deianeira my mistress many a time have I marked thy bitter tears and lamentations as thou bewailedst the going forth of Heracles but now—if it be meet to school the free born with the counsels of a slave and if I must say what behoves thee—why when thou art so rich in sons dost thou send no one of them to seek thy lord Hyllus before all who might well go on that errand if he cared that there should be tidings of his father s welfare? Lo! there he comes speeding towards the house with timely step if then thou deemest that I speak in season thou canst use at once my counsel and the man

Enter HYLLUS

De My child my son wise words may fall, it seems from humble lips this woman is a slave but hath spoken in the spirit of the free

Hyllus How mother? Tell me if it may be told

De It brings thee shame she saith that when thy father hath been so long a stranger thou ha t not sought to learn where he is

Hy Nay I know—if rumour can be trusted

De And in what region my child doth rumour place him?

Hy Last year they say through all the months he toiled as bondman to a Lydian woman

De If he bore that then no tidings can surprise

Hy Well he has been delivered from that as I hear

De Where then is he reported to be now—alive or dead?

Hy He is waging or planning a war they say upon Euboea the realm of Eurytus

De Knowest thou my son that he hath left with me sure oracles touching that land?

Hy What are they mother? I know not whereof thou speakest

De That either he shall meet his death or having achieved this task shall have rest thenceforth for all his days to come

So my child when his fate is thus trembling in the scale wilt thou not go to succour him? For we are saved if he find safety or we perish with him

Hy Ay I will go my mother and had I known the import of these prophecies I had been there long since but as it was my father s wonted fortune suffered me not to feel fear for him or to be anxious overmuch Now that I have the knowledge

I will spare no pains to learn the whole truth in this matter.

De. Go, then, my son; be the seeker, e er so late b is rewarded if h learn tidings of joy.

HYLLUS *departs.* *The* CHORUS OF TRACHINIAN MAIDENS *enters. They are the friends and confidantes of* DEIANEIRA.

Chorus

Thou whom Night brings forth at the moment when she is despoiled of her starry crown, and lays t est in thy splendour, tell me, I pray thee, O Sun-god, tell me where abides Alcmena's son? Thou glorious lord of flame, ... is he threading the straits of the sea, or hath he found an abode on either continent? Speak, thou who seest as none else can see!

For Deianeira, as I hear, hath ever an aching heart ... the battle prize of old, is now like some bird forlorn of its mate ... can never lull her yearning, nor stay her tears; haunted by a sleepless fear for her absent lord, ... pines on her anxious, widowed couch, miserable in her forebodings of mischance.

As one may see billow after billow driven o er the wide deep by the tireless southwind or the north, so the trouble of his life, stormy as the Cretan sea, now ... back the son of Cadmus, now lifts him to honour. But some god ever saves him from the house of death, and suffers him not to fail.

Lady, I praise not this thy mood, with all reverence will I speak, ... in reproof. Thou dost not well, I say, to kill fair hope by fretting; remember that the son of Cronus himself, the all-disposing king, hath not allotted a painless lot for mortals. Sorrow and joy come round to all, as the Bear moves in his circling paths.

Yea, starry night abides not with men, nor tribulation, nor wealth; in a moment it is gone from us, and another hath his turn of gladness, and of bereavement. So would I wish thee also, the Queen, to keep that prospect e er ... th tho h for when hath Zeus been found so careless of his children?

De. Ye have heard of my trouble, I think, and that hath brought you here; but the anguish which consumes my heart—ye are strangers to that; and never may ye learn b suffering! Yes, ... tender plant grows in those sheltered regions of its own; and the Sun-god's heat vexes it not, nor rain, nor any wind; but it rejoices in its sweet untroubled being, until such time as the maiden is called a wife, and finds her portion of anxious thoughts in the night, brooding on danger to husband or to children. Such a one could understand the burden of my cares, judging ... her own.

Well, I have had many a sorrow to weep for ere now; but I am going to speak of one more grievous than them all.

When Heracles my lord was going from home on his last journey, he left in the house an ancient tablet inscribed with tokens which he had never brought himself to explain to me before, many as were the ordeals to which he had gone forth. He had always departed as if to conquer, not to die. But now, as if he were a doomed man, he told me what portion of his substance I was to take for my dower, and how he would have his sons share their father's land amongst them. And he fixed the time; saying that, when a year and three months should have passed since he had left the country, then he was fated to die; or, if he should have survived that term, to live thenceforth an untroubled life.

Such, he said, was the doom ordained by the gods to be accomplished in the toils of Heracles; as the ancient oak at Dodona had spoken of yore, by the mouth of the two Peleiades. And this is the precise moment when the fulfilment of that word becomes due; so that I start up from sweet slumber, my friends, stricken with terror at the thought that I must remain widowed of the noblest among men.

Ch. Hush—no more ill-omened words; I see a man approaching, who wears a wreath, as if for joyous tidings.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Queen Deianeira, I shall be the first of messengers to free thee from fear. Know that Alcmena's son lives and triumphs, and from battle brings the first-fruits to the gods of this land.

De. What news is this, old man, that thou hast told me?

Me. That thy lord, admired of all, will soon come to this house, restored to thee in his victorious might.

De. What citizen or stranger hath told thee this?

Me. In the meadow, summer haunt of oxen, Lichas the herald is proclaiming it to many: from him I heard it, and flew hither, that I might be the first to give thee these tidings, and so might reap some guerdon from thee, and win thy grace.

De. And why is *he* not here, if he brings good news?

Me. His task, lady, is no easy one; all the Malian folk have thronged around him with questions, and he cannot move forward: each and all are bent on learning what they desire, and will not release him until they are satisfied. Thus their eagerness detains him against his will; but thou shalt presently see him face to face.

De. O Zeus, who rulest the meads of Oeta, sacred from the scythe, at last, though late, thou hast given us joy! Uplift your voices, ye women within the house and ye beyond our gates, since now we are gladdened by the light of this message, that hath risen on us beyond my hope!

Ch. Let the maidens raise a joyous strain for the house, with songs of triumph at the hearth; and, amidst them, let the shout of the men go up with one accord for Apollo of the bright quiver, our Defender! And at the same time, ye maidens, lift up a paean, cry aloud to his sister, the Ortygian Artemis,

smiter of deer goddess of the twofold torch and to the Nymphs her neighbours!

My spirit soars I will not reject the wooing of the flute O thou sovereign of my soul! Lo the ivy s spell begins to work upon me! Euoe! even now it moves me to whirl in the swift dance of Bacchanals!

Praise praise unto the Healer! See dear lady see! Behold these tidings are taking shape before thy gaze

De I see it dear maidens my watching eyes had not failed to note yon company (*Enter* LICHAS *followed by Captive Maidens*) All hail to the herald whose coming hath been so long delayed! if indeed thou bringest aught than can give joy

Lichas We are happy in our return and happy in thy greeting lady which befits the deed achieved for when a man hath *fair fortune* he needs must win good welcome

De O best of friends tell me first what first I would know—shall I receive Heracles alive?

Li I certainly left him alive and well—in vigorous health unburdened by disease

De Where tell me—at home or on foreign soil?

Li There is a headland of Euboea where to Cenaean Zeus he consecrates altars and the tribute of fruitful ground

De In payment of a vow or at the bidding of an oracle?

Li For a vow made when he was seeking to conquer and despoil the country of these women who are before thee

De And these—who are they I pray thee and whose daughters? They deserve pity unless their plight deceives me

Li *These are captives whom he chose out for him*self and for the gods when he sacked the city of Eurytus

De Was it the war against that city which kept him away so long beyond all forecast past all count of days?

Li Not so the greater part of the time he was detained in Lydia—no free man as he declares but sold into bondage No offence should attend on the word lady when the deed is found to be of Zeus So he passed a whole year as he himself avows in thraldom to Omphalè the barbarian And so stung was he by that reproach he bound himself by a solemn oath that he would one day enslave with wife and child the man who had brought that calamity upon him Nor did he speak the word in vain but when he had been purged gathered an alien host and went against the city of Eurytus That man he said alone of mortals had a share in causing his misfortune For when Heracles an old friend came to his house and hearth Eurytus heaped on him the taunts of a bitter tongue and spiteful soul saying Thou hast unerring arrows in thy hands and yet my ons surpass thee in the trial of archery Thou art a slave he cried a free man s broken thrall and at a banquet when his guest was full of wine he thrust him from his doors

Wroth thereat when afterward Iphitus came to the hill of Tiryns in search for horses that had strayed Heracles seized a moment when the man s wandering thoughts went not with his wandering gaze and hurled him from a tower like summit But in anger at that deed Zeus our lord Olympian sire of all sent him forth into bondage and spared not because this once he had taken a life by guile Had he wreaked his vengeance openly Zeus would surely have pardoned him the righteous triumph for the gods too love not insolence

So those men who waxed so proud with bitter speech are themselves in the mansions of the dead all of them and their city is enslaved while the women whom thou beholdest fallen from happiness to misery come here to thee for such was thy lord s command which I his faithful servant perform He himself thou mayest be sure—so soon as he shall have offered holy sacrifice for his victory to Zeus from whom he sprang—will be with thee After all the fair tidings that have been told this indeed is the sweetest word to hear

Ch Now O Queen thy joy is assured part is with thee and thou hast promise of the rest

De Yea have I not the fullest reason to rejoice at these tidings of my lord s happy fortune? To such fortune such joy must needs respond And yet a prudent mind can see room for misgiving lest he who prospers should one day suffer reverse A strange pity hath come over me friends at the sight of *these ill fated exiles homeless and fatherless in a* foreign land once the daughters perchance of free born sires but now doomed to the life of slaves O Zeus who turnest the tide of battle never may I see child of mine thus visited by thy hand nay if *such visitation is to be may it not fall while Deia*neira lives! Such dread do I feel beholding these

(*To* IOLE) Ah hapless girl say who art thou? A maiden or a mother? To judge by thine aspect an innocent maiden and of a noble race Lichas who e *daughter is this stranger? Who is her mother who* her sire? Speak I pity her more than all the rest when I behold her as she alone shows a due feeling for her plight

Li How should I know? Why should st thou ask me? Perchance the offspring of not the meanest *in* yonder land

De Can she be of royal race? Had Eurytus a daughter?

Li I know not indeed I asked not many questions

De And thou hast not heard her name from any of her companions?

Li No indeed I went through my task in silence

De Unhappy girl let me at least hear it from thine own mouth It is indeed distressing not to know *thy* name

Li It will be unlike her former behaviour then I can tell thee if she opens her lips for she hath not uttered one word but hath ever been travailing with the burden of her sorrow and weeping bitterly poor girl since she left her wind swept home

Such a state is grievous for herself, but claims our forbearance.

De. Then let her be left in peace, and pass under our roof as she wishes; her present woes must not be crowned with fresh pains at my hands: she hath enough already. Now let us all go in, that thou mayest start speedily on thy journey, while I make all things ready in the house.

(Lichas moves towards the house, followed by the Captives.)

Me. (coming nearer to Deianeira.) Ay, but first tarry here a brief space, that thou mayest learn, apart from yonder folk, whom thou art taking to thy hearth, and mayest gain the needful knowledge of things which have not been told to thee. Of these I am in full possession.

De. What means this? Why wouldest thou stay my departure?

Me. Pause and listen. My former story was worth thy hearing, and so will this one be, methinks.

De. Shall I call those others back? Or wilt thou speak before me and these maidens?

Me. To thee and these I can speak freely; never mind the others.

De. Well, they are gone; so thy story can proceed.

Me. Yonder man was not speaking the straightforward truth in aught that he has just told. He has given false tidings now, or else his former report was dishonest.

De. How sayest thou? Explain thy whole drift clearly; thus far thy words are riddles to me.

Me. I heard this man declare, before many witnesses, that for this maiden's sake Heracles overthrew Eurytus and the proud towers of Oechalia; Love, alone of the gods, wrought on him to do those deeds of arms—not the toilsome servitude to Omphale in Lydia, nor the death to which Iphitus was hurled. But now the herald has thrust Love out of sight, and tells a different tale.

Well, when he could not persuade her sire to give him the maiden for his paramour, he devised some petty complaint as a pretext, and made war upon her land—that in which, as he said, this Eurytus bore sway—and slew the prince her father, and sacked her city. And now, as thou seest, he comes sending her to this house not in careless fashion, lady, nor like a slave;—no, dream not of that—it is not likely, if his heart is kindled with desire.

I resolved therefore, O Queen, to tell thee all that I had heard from yonder man. Many others were listening to it, as I was, in the public place where the Trachinians were assembled; and they can convict him. If my words are unwelcome, I am grieved; but nevertheless I have spoken out the truth.

De. Ah me unhappy! In what plight do I stand? What secret bane have I received beneath my roof? Hapless that I am! Is she nameless, then, as her convoy sware?

Me. Nay, illustrious by name as by birth; she is the daughter of Eurytus, and was once called Iolè; she of whose parentage Lichas could say nothing, because, forsooth, he asked no questions.

Ch. Accursed, above other evil-doers, be the man whom deeds of treachery dishonour!

De. Ah, maidens, what am I to do? These latest tidings have bewildered me!

Ch. Go and inquire from Lichas; perchance he will tell the truth, if thou constrain him to answer.

De. Well, I will go; thy counsel is not amiss.

Me. And I, shall I wait here? Or what is thy pleasure?

De. Remain; here he comes from the house of his own accord, without summons from me.

Enter Lichas.

Li. Lady, what message shall I bear to Heracles? Give me thy commands, for, as thou seest, I am going.

De. How hastily thou art rushing away, when thy visit had been so long delayed,—before we have had time for further talk.

Li. Nay, if there be aught that thou would'st ask, I am at thy service.

De. Wilt thou indeed give me the honest truth?

Li. Yes, be great Zeus my witness, in anything that I know.

De. Who is the woman, then, whom thou hast brought?

Li. She is Euboean; but of what birth, I cannot say.

Me. Sirrah, look at me:—to whom art thou speaking, think'st thou?

Li. And thou—what dost thou mean by such a question?

Me. Deign to answer me, if thou comprehendest.

Li. To the royal Deianeira, unless mine eyes deceive me—daughter of Oeneus, wife of Heracles, and my queen.

Me. The very word that I wished to hear from thee: thou sayest that she is thy queen?

Li. Yes, as in duty bound.

Me. Well, then, what art thou prepared to suffer, if found guilty of failing in that duty?

Li. Failing in duty? What dark saying is this?

Me. 'Tis none; the darkest words are thine own.

Li. I will go,—I was foolish to hear thee so long.

Me. No, not till thou hast answered a brief question.

Li. Ask what thou wilt; thou art not taciturn.

Me. That captive, whom thou hast brought home—thou knowest whom I mean?

Li. Yes; but why dost thou ask?

Me. Well, saidst thou not that thy prisoner—she, on whom thy gaze now turns so vacantly—was Iolè, daughter of Eurytus?

Li. Said it to whom? Who and where is the man that will be thy witness to hearing this from me?

Me. To many of our own folk thou saidst it: in the public gathering of Trachinians, a great crowd heard thus much from thee.

Li. Ay—said they heard; but 'tis one thing to report a fancy, and another to make the story good.

Me. A fancy! Didst thou not say on thine oath that thou wast bringing her as a bride for Heracles?

Li. I? bringing a bride? In the name of the gods, dear mistress, tell me who this stranger may be?

Me One who heard from thine own lips that the conquest of the whole city was due to love for this girl the Lydian woman was not its destroyer but the passion which this maid has kindled

Li Lady let this fellow withdraw to prate with the brainsick befits not a sane man

De Nay I implore thee by Zeus whose lightnings go forth over the high glens of Oeta do not cheat me of the truth! For she to whom thou wilt speak is not ungenerous nor hath she yet to learn that the human heart is inconstant to its joys They are not wise then who stand forth to buffet against Love for Love rules the gods as he will and me and why not another woman such as I am? So I am mad in deed if I blame my husband because that distemper hath seized him or this woman his partner in a thing which is no shame to them and no wrong to me Impossible! No if he taught thee to speak falsely tis not a noble lesson that thou art learning or if thou art thine own teacher in this thou wilt be found cruel when it is thy wish to prove kind Nay tell me the whole truth To a free born man the name of liar cleaves as a deadly brand If thy hope is to escape detection that too is vain there are many to whom thou hast spoken who will tell me

And if thou art afraid thy fear is mistaken Not to learn the truth that indeed would pain me but to know it—what is there terrible in that? Hath not Heracles wedded others erenow—ay more than living man—and no one of them hath had harsh word or taunt from me nor shall this girl though her whole being should be absorbed in her passion for indeed I felt a profound pity when I beheld her because her beauty hath wrecked her life and she hapless one all innocent hath brought her father land to ruin and to bondage

Well those things must go with wind and stream To thee I say—deceive whom thou wilt but ever speak the truth to me

Ch Hearken to her good counsel and hereafter thou shalt have no cause to complain of this lady our thanks too will be thine

Li Nay then dear mistress—since I see that thou thinkest as mortals should think and canst allow for weakness—I will tell thee the whole truth and hide it not Yes it is even as yon man saith This girl inspired that overmastering love which long ago smote through the soul of Heracles for this girl s sake the desolate Oechalia her home was made the prey of his spear And he—it is just to him to say so—never denied this never told me to conceal it But I lady fearing to wound thy heart by such tidings have sinned if thou count this in any sort a sin

Now however that thou knowest the whole story for both your sakes—for his and not less for thine own—bear with the woman and be content that the words which thou hast spoken regarding her should bind thee still For he whose strength is victorious in all else hath been utterly vanquished by his passion for this girl

De Indeed mine own thoughts move me to act thus Trust me I will not add a new affliction to my burdens by waging a fruitless fight against the gods

But let us go into the house that thou mayest receive my messages and since gifts should be meetly recompensed with gifts that thou mayest take these also It is not right that thou shouldest go back with empty hands after coming with such a goodly train

Exit MESSENGER *as* LICHAS *and* DEIANEIRA *go into the house*

Ch Great and mighty is the victory which the Cyprian queen ever bears away I stay not now to speak of the gods I spare to tell how she beguiled the son of Cronus and Hades the lord of darkness or Poseidon shaker of the earth

But when this bride was to be won who were the valiant rivals that entered the contest for her hand? Who went forth to the ordeal of battle to the fierce blows and the blinding dust?

One was a mighty river god the dread form of a horned and four legged bull Achelous from Oeniadae the other came from Thebè dear to Bacchus, with curved bow and spears and brandished club the son of Zeus who then met in combat fain to win a bride and the Cyprian goddess of nuptial joy was there with them sole umpire of their strife

Then was there clatter of fists and clang of bow and the noise of a bull s horns therewith then were there close locked grapplings and deadly blows from the forehead and loud deep cries from both

Meanwhile she in her delicate beauty sat on the side of a hill that could be seen afar awaiting the husband that should be hers

[So the battle rages] as I have told but the fair bride who is the prize of the strife abides the end in piteous anguish And suddenly she is parted from her mother as when a heifer is taken from its dam

DEIANEIRA *enters from the house alone carrying in her arms a casket containing a robe*

De Dear friends while our visitor is saying his farewell to the captive girls in the house I have stolen forth to you—partly to tell you what these hands have devised and partly to crave your sympathy with my sorrow

A maiden—or methinks no longer a maiden but a mistress—hath found her way into my house as a freight comes to a mariner a merchandise to make shipwreck of my peace And now we twain are to share the same marriage bed the same embrace Such is the reward that Heracles hath sent me—he whom I called true and loyal—for guarding his home through all that weary time I have no thought of anger against him often as he is vexed with this distemper But then to live with her sharing the same union—what woman could endure it? For I see that the flower of her age is blossoming while mine is fading and the eyes of men love to cull the bloom of youth but they turn aside from the old This then is my fear—lest Heracles in name my spouse should be the younger s mate

But as I said anger ill beseems a woman of understanding I will tell you friends the way by which I hope to find deliverance and relief I had a gift given to me long ago by a monster of olden time

and stored in an urn of b onze a gift wh h, while t a girl, I took up from the sha y brea ted Nes- s s—from h his blood as h la d i Nessus, ho used to carry men in his arm for h across the deep waters of the E enus, usi no oar to waft th m nor sail sh p

I too, was carried on hi shoul lers—when by my fat s send n I first went forth with He a les as his wife and when I wa t m d t earn he touched me w th wanton hands. I shri ked th son of Zeus t rned quickl ound and shot a feath red a row t whizzed through his brea t to th lunes and in his mortal faint ess, thus m ch the Centaur pak

Ch ld of a ed Oeneus, thou shalt ha e t lea t th profit of my ferry n —if thou wilt heark — beca se thou wast the last whom I con e ed If thou gatherest w th thy hands th blood I tted round my w und t the place where th H d a Lerna s monstrous growth hath tin ed th rro

th black gall thi shall be to thee a cha m fo the soul f Hera les, so that he shall ev r look upo an oman t lo e b r m than thee

I bethou ht me f th s, m fr nd —f after h s des h I had k pt it carefull locked up t a se et pla and I ha e o ted th s obe do er th e to it a he enjo ed wh le he l ed The wo k is finished. May deeds f wi ked daring be e r far f om m th hts, and from my kn wledg —a I bh the women who tt mpt th m! B t f any se l ma p ail a rai t this g rl b l pell d harms used on H racles, th mean t that end a e ead unless, ndeed I seem to be acti ra h y if so, I ll des t f rthw th

Ch N f these measures gi e any grou l of onfid w think that th desig t amiss.

D W ll, th gro nd t d thu —the t fair p mise but I ha e n t y t essa ed the proof.

Ch N knowled e mu t c m thro gh tion thou ca st ha e test hich i not fanc ful sa b trial

D W ll w shall kno prese tl fo the e I see L man alread t th doors nd h w ll soon be go g Onl may m secret be well k pt b oul Wh l thy deed hidde eve though they be t se ml thou w li er be brought t t harne.

E t r L CH S

Li What thy ommand ? G me m cha g d hter f Oeneus fo al eady I ha tarr ed ov r long

D Ind ed I ha t bee seeing to th for thee Li has whil thou wast speaking t th st g r maid in the house that thou shouldest t ke f r m thi lo g robe woven b my hand a g ft t m bsent lo d

A d hen thou gi est t cha g h m that h and h shall be the first t wea t that t hall t be se b th light f the u no b th sac ed p ecinct n r by th fir t th hea th until he stand forth con picuous bef ll e es, and show t t the gods on da whe b ulls a e la

F thus had I wed that if I should er see or hear that b had ome safely hom I would duly clothe him in this robe and so prese t him to the gods, newl radiant at their altar in new garb

As proof thou halt carry a token which he w ll qu ckly recog ise with th circle of th s seal

N v go thy way and first remember the rule that messengers should not be meddle s next so bear thee that my thanks may be joined to h s, d ubl ng the grace which thou shalt wi

Li N if I pl thi herald r ft of Hermes w tl any sureness, I ll ne er trip in doin thine errand I w ll not fail to d l er this casket as it is, and to add th words i attestat on of th gift

De Thou m est be goin now fo thou know est well how th ngs are w th us in th hous.

Li I kno nd will report that all hath pros- pered

D And then th hast seen the greet ng gi n to th stra g r maiden—tl ou kn west how I wel comed her?

Li So that my heart was fi led w th wondering jo

D What m re the is there for thee to tell? I am afraid that it would be too soon to peak of the long g on my part before we know if I am longed for there

LICH s departs w h the casket DELANEIR retires into the h use

Chorus

O ye who d ell b the warm spri gs between ha en and cra and by Oeta s h ts O dw llers by the land locked waters of the M lian sea on the h sac ed to the g n godde s of th g lden shafts, wh re the G eeks meet n fam us co cil at th G tes

Soo hall the glorious oi e of the flut g up for you again esoundin w th no harsh strain of g ef b t w th such music th ly maketh to the god ! F r the son wh m Alcm na bo e to Ze s is hasten ng homeward with th tropl es of all p owess.

He was lost tterl to ur land wande er o er sea whil we waited thro h twel e long mo ths, and knew n th g a d his lo i g wif sad dweller with sad thoughts, was e r pin n mid h r tears. B t ow the War god roused to fury hath d l e ed her from the d s of her m urning

May he ome ma he com ! Pause not th ma y oa ed ship that ca es him t ll h shall ha e rea hed this town lea ng the land alt r where a rumou saith he is sac ifi ing! Thence may he come full of desi steeped in l by the speci us de e of the robe n which Persuasion hath spread her so e eign harm!

D LA EIR comes ut of the ho se in agitation.

D Fri nds, h w I fear that I may ha e gone too far in ll that I ha e been doing just ow!

Ch Wh t hath happened D ianeira da ghter of Oeneus

De I k w not but f el a misgi g that I shall presently be found to have wro ht a great mis- h f the iss e of a fair h pe.

Ch It is nothing surely that concerns thy gift to Heracles?

De Yea even so And henceforth I would say to all act not with zeal if ye act without light

Ch Tell us the cause of thy fear if it may be told

De *A thing hath come to pass my friends* such that if I declare it ye will hear a marvel whereof none could have dreamed

That with which I was lately anointing the festal robe—a white tuft of fleecy sheep s wool—hath disappeared —not consumed by anything in the house but self devoured and self destroyed as it crumbled down from the surface of a stone But I must tell the story more at length that thou mayest know *exactly how this thing befell*

I neglected no part of the precepts which the savage Centaur gave me when the bitter barb was rankling in his side they were in my memory like the graven words which no hand may wash from a tablet of bronze Now these were his orders and I obeyed them to keep this unguent in a secret place always remote from fire and from the sun s warm ray until I should apply it newly spread where I *wished So had I done And now* when the moment for action had come I performed the anointing privily in the house with a tuft of soft wool which I had plucked from a sheep of our homeflock then I folded up my gift and laid it unvisited by sunlight within its casket as ye saw

But as I was going back into the house I beheld a thing too wondrous for words and passing the wit of man to understand I happened to have thrown *the shred of wool with which I had been preparing* the robe into the full blaze of the sunshine As it grew warm it shrivelled all away and quickly crumbled to powder on the ground like nothing so much as the dust shed from a saw s teeth where men work timber In such a state it lies as it fell And from the earth where it was strewn clots of foam seethed up as when the rich juice of the blue fruit from the vine of Bacchus is poured upon the ground

So I know not hapless one whither to turn my thoughts I only see that I have done a fearful deed Why or wherefore should the monster in his death throes have shown good will to me on whose account he was dying? Impossible! No he was cajoling me in order to slay the man who had smitten him and I gain the knowledge of this too late when it avails no more Yes I alone—unless my foreboding prove false—I wretched one must destroy him! For I know that the arrow which made the wound did scathe even to the god Cheiron and it kills all beasts that it touches And since tis this same black venom in the blood that hath passed out through the wound of Nessus must it not kill my lord also? I *ween it must*

Howbeit I am resolved that if he is to fall at the same time I also shall be swept from life for no woman could bear to live with an evil name if she rejoices that her nature is not evil

Ch Mischief must needs be *feared but it is not* well to doom our hope before the event

De Unwise counsels leave no room even for a hope which can lend courage

Ch Yet towards those who have erred unwittingly men s anger is softened and so it should be towards thee

De Nay such words are not for one who has borne a part in the ill deed but only for him who has no trouble at his own door

Ch Twere well to refrain from further speech unless thou would st tell aught to thine own son for he is at hand who went erewhile to seek his sire

Enter HYLLUS

Hy O mother would that one of three things had befallen thee! Would that thou wert dead—or if living no mother of mine or that some new and better spirit had passed into thy bosom

De Ah my son what cause have I given thee to abhor me?

Hy I tell thee that thy husband—yea my sire—hath been done to death by thee this day!

De Oh what word hath passed thy lips my child!

Hy A word that shall not fail of fulfilment for who may undo that which hath come to pass?

De What saidst thou my son? Who is thy warranty for charging me with a deed so terrible?

Hy I have seen my father s grievous fate with mine own eyes I speak not from hearsay

De And where didst thou find him—where didst thou stand at his side?

Hy If thou art to hear it then must all be told

After sacking the famous town of Eurytus he *went his way with the trophies and first fruits* of victory There is a sea washed headland of Euboea Cape Cenaeum where he dedicated altars and a sacred grove to the Zeus of his fathers and there I first beheld him with the joy of yearning love

He was about to celebrate a great sacrifice when his own herald Lichas came to him from home bearing thy gift the deadly robe which he put on according to thy precept and then began his offering with twelve bulls free from blemish the first lings of the spoil but altogether *he brought a hundred* victims great or small to the altar

At first hapless one he prayed with serene soul rejoicing in his comely garb But when the blood *fed flame began to blaze from the holy offerings* and from the resinous pine a sweat broke forth upon his flesh and the tunic clung to his sides at every joint close glued as if by a craftsman s hand there came a biting pain that racked his bones and then th venom as of some deadly cruel viper began to devour him

Thereupon he shouted for the unhappy Lichas—in no wise to blame for thy crime—asking what treason had moved him to bring that robe but he all unknowing hapless one said that he had brought the gift from thee alone as it had been sent When his master heard it as a piercing spasm clutched his lungs he caught him by the foot where the ankle *turns in the socket and hurled him* at a surf beaten rock in the sea and he made the white brain to ooze

from th hair as the skull was dashed to splinters, and blood scattered therewith.

But all th people lifted up a cry of awe struck en f, seeing that one was frenzied and the other sa n and no one dared to come bef re the man. For th pain dragged him to earth, or made him leap into th air with yells and shrieks, till the cliffs r ng round steep headlands of Locris and Euboean capes.

B t when he was spent with oft throwing himself on th ground in his anguish and oft making loud lament—cursing his fatal marriage with thee the vile one and his alliance with Oeneus, saying how h had found in t the ruin of his life—then from out f the shrouding altar smoke, he lifted up his wildly rolling eyes, nd saw me in the great crowd eeping He turned his gaze on me and called me O son draw nea do not fly from my trouble, even thou h thou must shar my death Come, bear me forth and set m if thou canst n a place where no man shall see m r f th pity f rb d that t least con y me with all speed out f this land and let me ot die where I am.

That ommand sufficed we laid him n mid ship nd b ought him—but hardly brought him—to this shore moaning in his to me ts. And ye shall presently beh ld him, al e or lately dead

Such, m ther re the designs nd deeds g inst my sire whereof thou ha t been found guilty May engin Ju tic and the Erinys isit thee for them! Yes, if t be ri ht that is my prayer and right it s —for I ha e seen thee trampl on the ri ht, by slaying the blest man in all th world whose like thou shalt see nev rm re!

DEIA E R moves t ards the ho se

Ch. (to DEI EIR) Why dost thou depart in si len ? Knowest thou not that such sil nce pleads for thine cuser?

D EIR goes in.o th ho se

Hy Let her depart A fai wind peed her far from m ght Why should the nam of mother bring he semblan e f espect when she is ll unlik a m th her deed? No, l t her go—fa w ll to he and may such j y as she gi es my sire become her own!

Chorus

See ma d ns, how suddenly the divene w rd of th old p phecy hath com upon s, which said that wh th twelfth year hould h run throu h t f ll tal f m ths, t sh uld e d th t es of toils for th tru born so f Zeus! And that p m ise is wafted su l t f ulment. For how hall h h behold t th light ha e toilsom serv tud any mo beyond th gra e?

If loud f death is round him, nd th doom wrought b th Centaur ter fr is ti ein his sides, hes lea es th enom wh ch Thanatos begat and th gleami serpe t nourished how ca he look upon to-morrow s sun —when that appalling Hydra shape holds him i its grip and those murderous goads prepared by the wily words of black haired Nessus, ha e started into fury vexing him w th tumultuous pain?

Of such things th s hapless lady had no foreboding but she saw a great mischief swiftly coming on her hom from the new marriage Her own hand applied the remedy but for the issues of a stranger s counsel gi en at a fatal meeti g —for these I ween, she makes despairin lament shedd g the tender dew of plenteous tears. And the coming fate foreshadows a great misfortune c ntri ed by guile.

Our streaming tears break forth alas, a plague is upo him more piteous than any sufferin that foemen ever brought upon that glorious hero.

Ah, thou dark steel of th spear foremost in battle by whose might yo der bride was lately borne so swiftly fr m Oechalia s hei hts! But the Cyprian goddess, ministering in silence hath been plainly pro ed the doer of these deeds

First Semi Chorus Is it fancy or do I hear some cry of grief just passing through the house? What is this?

Second Semi Ch No uncertain sound but a wa l of anguish from within the house hath some new trouble

Ch And mark how sadly with what a cloud upon her brow that aged woman ap roaches, to gi e us tidings.

Enter NUR E, from the h use

Nurse Ah, my daughters, great indeed were the sorrows that we were to reap from the gift sent to H racles!

Ch Aged woman what new mischance hast thou to tell?

N Deianeira hath d parted on the last of all her journeys, departed w thout stirrin foot.

Ch Thou speakest not f death?

Nu My tale is t ld

Ch Dead hapless on ?

Nu Again thou hearest it.

Ch Hapless, lost one! Say what was the manner of h r death?

N Oh a cruel deed was the e!

Ch Speak, woman, how hath she met h r doom?

N By her wn hand hath she d ed

Ch What f ry hat pa gs of frenz ha cut her off by th ed e of dire weapo ? How contri ed h this death, f llowing death—all wrought by her alone?

Nu By the stroke of the sword that makes sorrow

Ch Sawest thou that violent deed poor h lpless one?

N I saw t yea I wa standin near

Ch Whence came it? How was t d ? Oh speak!

N 'Twas the work of her own mind and her own hand

Ch What dost thou tell us?

Nu Th sure truth.

Ch It is nothing surely that concerns thy gift to Heracles?

De Yea even so And henceforth I would say to all act not with zeal if ye act without light

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Enter HYLLUS

Hy O mother would that one of three things had befallen thee! Would that thou wert dead—or if living no mother of mine or that some new and better spirit had passed into thy bosom

De Ah my son what cause have I given thee to abhor me?

Hy I tell thee that thy husband—yea my sire—hath been done to death by thee this day!

De Oh what word hath passed thy lips, my child!

Hy A word that shall not fail of fulfilment for who may undo that which hath come to pass?

De What saidst thou my son? Who is thy war ranty for charging me with a deed so terrible?

Hy I have seen my father s grievous fate with mine own eyes I speak not from hearsay

De And where didst thou find him—where didst thou stand at his side?

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After sacking the famous town of Eurytus he went his way with the trophies and first fruits of victory There is a sea washed headland of Euboea Cape Cenaeum where he dedicated altars and a sacred grove to the Zeus of his fathers and there I first beheld him with the joy of yearning love

He was about to celebrate a great sacrifice when his own herald Lichas came to him from home bearing thy gift the deadly robe which he put on according to thy precept and then began his offer ing with twelve bulls free from blemish the first lings of the spoil but altogether he brought a hun dred victims great or small to the altar

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Thereupon he shouted for the unhappy Lichas—in no wise to blame for thy crime—asking what treason had moved him to bring that robe but he, all unknowing hapless one said that he had brought the gift from thee alone as it had been sent When his master heard it as a piercing spasm clutched his lungs he caught him by the foot where the ankle turns in the socket and hurled him at a surf beaten rock in the sea and he made the white brain to ooze

from the hair, as the skull was dashed to splinters and blood scattered therewith.

But all the people lifted up a cry of awe-struck grief, seeing that one was frenzied and the other slain; and no one dared to come before the man. For the pain dragged him to earth, or made him leap into the air, with yells and shrieks, till the cliffs rang around, steep headlands of Locris, and Euboean capes.

But when he was spent with oft throwing himself on the ground in his anguish, and oft making loud lament—cursing his fatal marriage with thee, the vile one, and his alliance with Oeneus, saying how he had found in it the ruin of his life—then, from out of the shrouding altar-smoke, he lifted up his wildly rolling eyes, and saw me in the great crowd, weeping. He turned his gaze on me and called me: 'O son, draw near; do not fly from my trouble, even though thou must share my death. Come, bear me forth, and set me, if thou canst, in a place where no man shall see me; or, if thy pity forbids that, at least convey me with all speed out of this land, and let me not die where I am.'

That command sufficed; we laid him in mid-ship and brought him—but hardly brought him—to this shore, moaning in his torments. And ye shall presently behold him, alive, or lately dead.

Such, mother, are the designs and deeds against my sire whereof thou hast been found guilty. May avenging Justice and the Erinys visit thee for them! Yes, if it be right, that is my prayer: and right it is,—for I have seen thee trample on the right, by slaying the noblest man in all the world, whose like thou shalt see nevermore!

[DEIANEIRA moves towards the house.

Ch. (to DEIANEIRA) Why dost thou depart in silence? Knowest thou not that such silence pleads for thine accuser?

[DEIANEIRA goes into the house.

Hy. Let her depart. A fair wind speed her far from my sight! Why should the name of *mother* bring her a semblance of respect, when she is all unlike a mother in her deeds? No, let her go,—farewell to her; and may such joy as she gives my sire become her own!

Chorus

See, maidens, how suddenly the divine word of the old prophecy hath come upon us, which said that, when the twelfth year should have run through its full tale of months, it should end the series of toils for the true-born son of Zeus! And that promise is wafted surely to its fulfilment. For how shall he who beholdeth not the light have toilsome servitude any more beyond the grave?

If a cloud of death is around him, and the doom wrought by the Centaur's craft is stinging his sides, where cleaves the venom which Thanatos begat and the gleaming serpent nourished, how can he look upon to-morrow's sun,—when that appalling Hydra-shape holds him in its grip, and those murderous goads, prepared by the wily words of black-haired Nessus, have started into fury, vexing him with tumultuous pain?

Of such things this hapless lady had no foreboding; but she saw a great mischief swiftly coming on her home from the new marriage. Her own hand applied the remedy; but for the issues of a stranger's counsel, given at a fatal meeting,—for these, I ween, she makes despairing lament, shedding the tender dew of plenteous tears. And the coming fate foreshadows a great misfortune, contrived by guile.

Our streaming tears break forth: alas, a plague is upon him more piteous than any suffering that foemen ever brought upon that glorious hero.

Ah, thou dark steel of the spear foremost in battle, by whose might yonder bride was lately borne so swiftly from Oechalia's heights! But the Cyprian goddess, ministering in silence, hath been plainly proved the doer of these deeds.

First Semi-Chorus. Is it fancy, or do I hear some cry of grief just passing through the house? What is this?

Second Semi-Ch. No uncertain sound, but a wail of anguish from within: the house hath some new trouble.

Ch. And mark how sadly, with what a cloud upon her brow, that aged woman approaches, *to give us* tidings.

Enter NURSE, from the house

Nurse. Ah, my daughters, great indeed were the sorrows that we were to *reap from the* gift sent to Heracles!

Ch. Aged woman, what new mischance hast thou to tell?

Nu. Deianeira hath departed on the last of all her journeys, departed without stirring foot.

Ch. Thou speakest not of death?

Nu. My tale is told.

Ch. Dead, hapless one?

Nu. Again thou hearest it.

Ch. Hapless, lost one! Say, what was the manner of her death?

Nu. Oh, a cruel deed was there!

Ch. Speak, woman, how hath she met her doom?

Nu. By her own hand hath she died.

Ch. What fury, what pangs of frenzy have cut her off by the edge of a dire weapon? How contrived she this death, following death,—all wrought by her alone?

Nu. By the stroke of the sword that makes sorrow.

Ch. Sawest thou that violent deed, poor helpless one?

Nu. I saw it; yea, I was standing near.

Ch. Whence came it? How was it done? Oh, speak!

Nu. 'Twas the work of her own mind and her own hand.

Ch. What dost thou tell us?

Nu. The sure truth.

Ch The first born the first born of that new bride is a dread Erinys for this house!

Nu Too true and hadst thou been an eye witness of the action verily thy pity would have b en yet deeper

Ch And could a woman s hand dare to do such deeds?

Nu Yea with dread daring thou shalt hear and then thou wilt bear me witness

When she came alone into the hou e and saw her son preparing a deep litter in the court that he might go back with it to meet his sire then she hid herself where none might see and falling before the altars she wailed aloud that they were left desolate and when she touched any household thing that she had been wont to u e poor lady in the past her tears would flow or when roaming hither and thither through the house she beheld the form of any well loved servant she wept hapless one at that sight crying aloud upon her own fate and that of the household which would thenceforth be in the power of others

But when she ceased from this suddenly I beheld her rush into the chamber of Heracles From a secret place of espial I watched her and saw her spreading coverings on the couch of her lord When she had done this she sprang thereon and sat in the middle of the bed her tears burst forth in burning streams and thus she spake Ah bridal bed and bridal chamber mine farewell now and for ever never more shall ye receive me to rest upon this couch She said no more but with a vehement hand loosed her robe where the gold wrought brooch lay above her breast baring all her left side and arm Then I ran with all my strength and warned her son of her intent But lo in the space between my going and our return she had driven a two edged sword through her side to the heart

At that sight her son uttered a great cry for he knew alas that in his anger he had driven her to that deed and he had learned too late from the ser ants in the house that she had acted without knowledge by the prompting of the Centaur And now the youth in his misery bewailed her with all passionate lament he knelt and showered kisses on her lips he threw himself at her side upon the ground bitterly crying that he had rashly smitten her with a slander weeping that he must now live bereaved of both alik —of mother and of sire

Such are the fortunes of this house Rash indeed is he who reckons on the morrow or haply on days beyond it for to morrow is not until to day is safely past

Ch Which woe shall I b wail first which misery is the greater? Alas tis hard for me to tell

One sorrow may be seen in the house for one we wait with foreboding and suspense hath a kinship with pain

Oh that some strong breeze might come with wafting power unto our hearth to bear me far from this land lest I die of terror when I look but once upon the mighty son of Zeus!

For they say that he is approaching the house in torments from which there is no deliverance a wonder of unutterable woe

Ah it was not far off but close to us that woe of which my lament gave warning like the nightingale s piercing note!

Men of an alien race are coming yonder And how then are they bringing him? In sorrow as for some loved one they move on their mournful noiseless march

Alas he is brought in silence! What are we to think that he is dead or sleeping?

Enter HYLLUS *and an* OLD MAN *with a* *attendant bearing* HERACLES *upon a litter*

Hy Woe is me for thee my father woe is me for thee wretched that I am! Whither shall I turn? What can I do? Ah me!

Old Man (whispering) Hush my son! Rouse not the cruel pain that infuriates thy sire! He lives, though prostrated Oh put a stern restraint upon thy lips!

Hy How sayest thou old man—is he alive?

O M (whispering) Thou must not awake the slumberer! Thou must not rouse and revive the dread frenzy that visits him my son!

Hy Nay I am crushed with this weight of misery—there is madness in my heart!

Heracles (awaking) O Zeus to what land have I come? Who are these among whom I lie tortured with unending agonies? Wretched wretched that I am! Oh that dire pest is gnawing me once more!

O M (to HYLLUS*)* Knew I not how much better it was that thou shouldest keep silence instead of scaring slumber from his brain and eyes?

Hy Nay I cannot be patient when I behold this misery

He O thou Cenaean rock whereon mine altars rose what a cruel reward hast thou won me for tho e fair offerings—be Zeus my witness! Ah to what ruin hast thou brought me to what ruin! Would that I had never beheld thee for thy sorrow! Then had I never come face to face with this fiery madness which no spell can soothe! Where is the charmer where is the cunning healer save Zeus alone that shall lull this plague to rest? I should marvel if he ever came within my ken!

Ah!

Leave me hapless one to my rest—lea e me to my last rest!

Where art thou touching me? Whither wouldst thou turn me? Thou wilt kill me thou wilt kill me! If there be any pang that slumbers thou hast aroused it!

It hath seized me oh the pest comes again! Whence are ye most ungrateful of all the Greeks? I wore out my troublous days in ridding Greece of pests, on the deep and in all forests and now when I am stricken will no man succour me with merciful fire or sword?

Oh will no one come and sever the head at one fierce stroke from this wretched body? Woe woe is m !

O M Son of Heracle th s task exceeds my strength —h lp thou—f r st ength i at thy c mma d too la gely t need my a d in his rel f.

Hy My hands are helping but n resource in myself or from an th r a ails me to make h s life f rget its anguish such is the doom appo nted by Zeus!

H O my son whe e a t thou? Ra se m —take hold f me—thus, thus! Alas, my destiny!

Again again the cruel pest leaps f rth to rend me the h rce plagu with wh ch n ne may cope!

O P llas, Pall s, it t rtures me again! Ala my so p ty thy sir —d aw a blameless sword d smit beneath my colla bone and heal this pa n wh ch th thy godless m ther hath made me wild! So may I see her fall,—thus, e en thu s she hath destroyed me! Sweet H des b other of Zeus we me rest g ve me rest end my woe by a swiftly ped doom!

Ch I shudder fr ends to hear these sor ows of our lord what a man is here and what t rments affl t him!

He Ah fierce f ll oft a d g ev us not in name alo e ha e b en th labours of these hands the bu d ns borne upo these l ulde s! But o t l e er laid on me by the wife f Zeus r by the hate f l Eury theus w s l ke unto thi th g wh ch the da ght of O u f and false hath fasten d po my ba k—thi w n n t of the F r es, in which I per h! Glu d to my s de t hath eat n my fle h t th mo t part it i e e with me suck ng th ha n ls of my b eath already it hath drained my f esh lif blood a d m wh le body is wa ted captu e to these nutt r bl bonds

N t th war on th battl fi ld n r the Gia ts ea th bo n host n r th might f sa age bea ts, hath e e do unto m thu — r Hellas no the land of the al n n land to which I h come a a deli er r no a oma n weak woman born n t to the st gth f ma lia! ne hath v n ju hed m w th t t k f sword!

Son ho thy elf my so und ed and do n thon ou most nam b e s es b n fo th the oman that ba e the and gi e he w th th ne ow ha d nt my hand that I may kno of tr th hi h l t g y thee most—my t tu ed frame, or h rs wh he suff sh r r ght ou doom!

G my son h k n t— nd how thy p ty for me h ma y m ' r d m p til) F m moan t g d weep ng lik g l a d th ma h e ot ho a sa that he ev saw me d th s l. f f o without ompla n I t d t h th m n e f fo t n led B t w alas, th t g m n hath be fou d w man

Approa h s a d near th nd e h t a face t that hath b ght m t thus pass f r I w ll lift th l Beh ld! Look ll f you thus m rabl bod se h w wr tched ho v p te us is my pl ght!

Ah ye m !

The F r g th oe f torm t is there n w it da t th ough my de —I m t wrestle once more w th th t l de g plagu !

O thou l rd of the dark realm re ei me! Smite m O fire f Zeus! Hurl down thy thunderbolt O king s nd it O father upon my head! For again the pest is con uming me t hath blazed forth it hath started into fu y! O hands, my hands O shoul der and breast and tru ty arms ye now in th s pl ght are the same whose force of old subdued the dweller in N mea the scourge of herdsmen the l n creature that n man m ght approach or con front ye t med the Lernaean Hydra and that mon strous host of double form man jo ned to steed a rac w th whom n ne may commune violent law less of surpa s ng m ght ye tamed the Eryman th an bea t and the th ree headed whelp of Hades underground a resistless terror offspring of the dread Ech dna ye tamed the dragon that guarded the golden fruit i the utmost places of the earth

These to l nd c untless others have I pro ed nor hath any ma vaunted triumph o er m y pro e s But now w th jo nts unh nged and with flesh torn to shreds I have bec me the miserabl prey of an unseen destroyer—I who am called the son of n blest m ther I whose reputed s re is Zeus lord of the starry sky

But ye may be sure f one thing th ugh I am as nought thou h I a not mo e a step yet she who h th d ne th deed shall f l my hea y ha d even now let her b t come and she shall learn to pro claim th s messa e unto all that in m y death as in my life I chast sed th w cked!

Ch Ah hapl ss Gree e what mourning do I fore se for he if she mu t lose th s man!

Hy Father s nce thy pause permits an answer hear me afflicted th ugh thou art I will ask thee for no m r than is my due Acc pt my counsels, in a calmer mood tha that to which this n er st ngs th e else thou car t n t learn how vain s t's desi e f r re gean e and l ca seless thy resentment

He S y what th u wilt and cea e in this my pain I understa d nought of all thy r ddling or ls.

Hy I c me t tell thee of my mother—how it is n w w th h r and h w she inned unwitt ngly

H Villa n! What—ha t tho dared to b eathe her nam agai in my hea ng the name f the moth r who hath sla n thy si e?

Hy Yea such i her t te that ler ce is unmeet

H Unme t t uly n ew f h r pa t er me

Hy And also f her deeds this day—as thou w t o n

He Speak—but g ve heed th t thou be n t f und a tr it r

Hy Thes are my t d ngs Sh is lead lat ly sl n

He By whose hand? A nd ous ness ge from a p oph t f ill-omened v ce!

Hy By her ow hand a d no t ang r s

H Alas, she d ed by m e a he deser d!

Hy Even thy wrath would be turn d couldst thou hear ll

He A str nge p eamble b it unfold thy mean

Hy Th um s th s h e red th a good intent

He I t good deed tho wretch to ha e slain thy sire?

Ch The first born the first born of that new bride is a dread Erinys for this house!

Nu Too true and hadst thou been an eye witness of the action verily thy pity would have been yet deeper

Ch And could a woman s hand dare to do such deeds?

Nu Yea with dread daring thou shalt hear and then thou wilt bear me witness

When she came alone into the house and saw her son preparing a deep litter in the court that he might go back with it to meet his sire then she hid herself where none might see and falling before the altars she wailed aloud that they were left desolate and when she touched any household thing that she had been wont to use poor lady in the past her tears would flow or when roaming hither and thither through the house she beheld the form of any well loved servant she wept hapless one at that sight crying aloud upon her own fate and that of the household which would thenceforth be in the power of others

But when she ceased from this suddenly I beheld her rush into the chamber of Heracles From a secret place of espial I watched her and saw her spreading coverings on the couch of her lord When she had done this she sprang thereon and sat in the middle of the bed her tears burst forth in burning streams and thus she spake *Ah bridal bed and bridal chamber mine farewell now and for ever never more shall ye receive me to rest upon this couch* She said no more but with a vehement hand loosed her robe where the gold wrought brooch lay above her breast baring all her left side and arm Then I ran with all my strength and warned her son of her intent But lo in the space between my going and our return she had driven a two edged sword through her side to the heart

At that sight her son uttered a great cry for he knew alas that in his anger he had driven her to that deed and he had learned too late from the servants in the house that she had acted without knowledge by the prompting of the Centaur And now the youth in his misery bewailed her with all passionate lament he knelt and showered kisses on her lips he threw himself at her side upon the ground bitterly crying that he had rashly smitten her with a slander weeping that he must now live bereaved of both alike—of mother and of sire

Such are the fortunes of this house Rash indeed is he who reckons on the morrow or haply on days beyond it for to morrow is not until to-day is safely past

Ch Which woe shall I bewail first which misery is the greater? Alas tis hard for me to tell

One sorrow may be seen in the house for one we wait with foreboding and suspense hath a kinship with pain

Oh that some strong breeze might come with wafting power unto our hearth to bear me far from this land lest I die of terror when I look but once upon the mighty son of Zeus!

For they say that he is approaching the house in torments from which there is no deliverance a wonder of unutterable woe

Ah it was not far off but close to us that woe of which my lament gave warning like the nightingale s piercing note!

Men of an alien race are coming yonder And how then are they bringing him? In sorrow as for some loved one they move on their mournful noiseless march

Alas he is brought in silence! What are we to think that he is dead or sleeping?

Enter HYLLUS *and an* OLD MAN *with attendants bearing* HERACLES *upon a litter*

Hy Woe is me for thee my father woe is me for thee wretched that I am! Whither shall I turn? What can I do? Ah me!

Old Man (*whispering*) Hush my son! Rouse not the cruel pain that infuriates thy sire! He lives, though prostrated Oh put a stern restraint upon thy lips!

Hy How sayest thou old man—is he alive?

O M (*whispering*) Thou must not awake the slumberer! Thou must not rouse and revive the dread frenzy that visits him my son!

Hy Nay I am crushed with this weight of misery—there is madness in my heart!

Heracles (*awaking*) O Zeus to what land have I come? Who are these among whom I lie tortured with unending agonies? Wretched wretched that I am! Oh that dire pest is gnawing me once more!

O M (*to* HYLLUS) Knew I not how much better it was that thou shouldest keep silence instead of scaring slumber from his brain and eyes?

Hy Nay I cannot be patient when I behold this misery

He O thou Cenaean rock whereon mine altars rose what a cruel reward hast thou won me for those fair offerings—be Zeus my witness! Ah to what ruin hast thou brought me to what ruin! Would that I had never beheld thee for thy sorrow! Then had I never come face to face with this fiery madness which no spell can soothe! Where is the charmer where is the cunning healer save Zeus alone that shall lull this plague to rest I should marvel if he ever came within my ken!

Ah!

Leave me hapless one to my rest—leave me to my last rest!

Where art thou touching me? Whither wouldst thou turn me? Thou wilt kill me thou wilt kill me! If there be any pang that slumbers thou hast aroused it!

It hath seized me oh the pest comes again! Whence are ye most ungrateful of all the Greeks? I wore out my troublous days in ridding Greece of pests on the deep and in all forests and now when I am stricken will no man succour me with merciful fire or sword?

Oh will no one come and sever the head at one fierce stroke from this wretched body? Woe woe is me!

Hy Ah thou wilt soon show m thinks, how distempered thou rt!

He Yea, for thou art b eaking the slumber of my plague.

Hy Hapless that I am! What perplexities sur round m !

He Yea sinc thou deignest not to hear thy sire.

Hy But must I learn then to be impious, my father?

H 'Tis not impiet if thou shalt gladden my heart.

Hy Dost thou command me, then to do this deed, as a clea duty?

He I command thee—the gods bear me w tness!

Hy Then will I do t and refuse ot—callin upon th god to w t ess thy deed I ca ne er be condem ed for loyalty t thee my fath r

He Thou endest well and to these words, my son quickl add the gracious deed that th u may est la me on the pyre before any pain returns to rend or sting me.

Come, make haste and lift me! This, in truth, is rest from troubles this is the end and the last end f Heracles!

Hy Nothi g indeed hinders the fulfilment of thy wish since thy command constrains us my father

H Come then ere thou arouse this plague O my stubborn soul, gi e me a curb as of steel on lips set like s on to stone, and let no cry escape them seeing that the deed which thou art to do, though done perforce s yet worthy of thy joy!

Hy Lift him f llowers! And grant m full for gi eness f r this but mark the great cruelt of the god in th deeds that are being done They beg t children they ar hailed as fathers, and yet they can look upon such suff rings.

Th attendants raise H RA CLES on the litter and move s o ly off as HYLLUS chants to the Chorus in the closing li es

No man fo esees the future but the present is fraught with mourning for us, and with shame for the powers abo e and rly with anguish beyond compare for him who endures this doom.

Maidens, c m ye also, nor lin er at the house ye who ha e latel seen a d ead death, w th sorrows manifold and strange and in all this there is nought but Zeus.

Hy Nay she thought to use a love charm for thy heart when she saw the new bride in the house but missed her aim

He And what Trachinian deals in spells so potent?

Hy Nessus the Centaur persuaded her of old to inflame thy desire with such a charm

He Alas alas miserable that I am! Woe is me I am lost—undone undone! No more for me the light of day! Alas now I see in what a plight I stand! Go my son—for thy father s end hath come—summon I pray thee all thy brethren summon too the hapless Alcmena in vain the bride of Zeus that ye may learn from my dying lips what oracles I know

Hy Nay thy mother is not here as it chances she hath her abode at Tiryns by the sea Some of thy children she hath taken to live with her there and others thou wilt find are dwelling in Thebè s town But we who are with thee my father will render all service that is needed at thy bidding

He Hear then thy task now is the time to show what stuff is in thee who art called my son

It was foreshown to me by my Sire of old that I should perish by no creature that had the breath of life but by one that had passed to dwell with Hades So I have been slain by this savage Centaur the living by the dead even as the divine will had been foretold

And I will show thee how later oracles tally there with confirming the old prophecy I wrote them down in the grove of the Selli dwellers on the hills whose couch is on the ground they were given by my Father s oak of many tongues which said that at the time which liveth and now is my release from the toils laid upon me should be accomplished And I looked for prosperous days but the meaning it seems was only that I should die for toil comes no more to the dead

Since then my son those words are clearly finding their fulfilment thou on thy part must lend me thine aid Thou must not delay and so provoke me to bitter speech thou must consent and help with a good grace as one who hath learned that best of laws obedience to a sire

Hy Yea father—though I fear the issue to which our talk hath brought me—I will do thy good pleasure

He First of all lay thy right hand in mine

Hy For what purpose dost thou insist upon this pledge?

He Give thy hand at once—disobey me not!

Hy Lo there it is thou shalt not be gainsaid

He Now swear by the head of Zeus my sire!

Hy To do what deed? May this also be told?

He To perform for me the task that I shall enjoin

Hy I swear it with Zeus for witness of the oath

He And pray that if thou break this oath thou mayest suffer

Hy I shall not suffer for I shall keep it yet so I pray

He Well, thou knowest the summit of Oeta sacred to Zeus?

Hy Ay I have often stood at his altar on that height

He Thither then thou must carry me up with thine own hands aided by what friends thou wilt thou shalt lop many a branch from the deep-rooted oak and hew many a faggot also from the sturdy stock of the wild olive thou shalt lay my body thereupon and kindle it with flaming pine torch

And let no tear of mourning be seen there no do this without lament and without weeping if thou art indeed my son But if thou do it not even from the world below my curse and my wrath shall wait on thee for ever

Hy Alas my father what hast thou spoken? How hast thou dealt with me!

He I have spoken that which thou must perform if thou wilt not then get thee some other sire and be called my son no more!

Hy Woe woe is me! What a deed dost thou require of me my father —that I should become thy murderer guilty of thy blood!

He Not so in truth but healer of my sufferings, sole physician of my pain!

Hy And how by enkindling thy body shall I heal it?

He Nay if that thought dismay thee at least perform the rest

Hy The service of carrying thee shall not be refused

He And the heaping of the pyre as I have bidden?

Hy Yea save that I will not touch it with mine own hand All else will I do and thou shalt have no hindrance on my part

He Well so much shall be enough But add one small boon to thy large benefits

Hy Be the boon never so large it shall be granted

He Knowest thou then the girl whose sire was Eurytus?

Hy It is of Iole that thou speakest if I mistake not

He Even so This in brief is the charge that I give thee my son When I am dead if thou wouldest show a pious remembrance of thine oath unto thy father disobey me not but take this woman to be thy wife Let no other espouse her who hath lain at my side but do thou O my son make that marriage bond thine own Consent after loyalty in great matters to rebel in less is to cancel the grace that had been won

Hy Ah me it is not well to be angry with a sick man but who could bear to see him in such a mind?

He Thy words show no desire to do my bidding

Hy What! When she alone is to blame for my mother s death and for thy present plight besides? Lives there the man who would make such a choice unless he were maddened by avenging fiend ?

Better were it father that I too should die rather than live united to the worst of our foes!

He He will render no reverence it seems to my dying prayer Nay be sure that the curse of the gods will attend thee for disobedience to my voice

wrought my doom. No, the thing that must be performed is just this—how thou mayest win the peerless arms by stealth. I well know, my son, that by nature thou art not apt to utter or contrive such guile; yet seeing that victory is a sweet prize to gain, bend thy will thereto; our honesty shall be shown forth another time. But now lend thyself to me for one little knavish day, and then, through all thy days to come, be called the most righteous of mankind.

Ne. When counsels pain my ear, son of Laertes, then I abhor to aid them with my hand. It is not in my nature to compass aught by evil arts,—no, nor was it, as men say, in my sire's. But I am ready to take the man by force, not by fraud; for, having the use of one foot only, he cannot prevail in fight against us who are so many. And yet, having been sent to act with thee, I am loth to be called traitor. But my wish, O King, is to do right and miss my aim, rather than succeed by evil ways.

Od. Son of brave sire, time was when I too, in my youth, had a slow tongue and a ready hand: but now, when I come forth to the proof, I see that words, not deeds, are ever the masters among men.

Ne. What, then, is thy command? What, but that I should lie?

Od. I say that thou art to take Philoctetes by guile.

Ne. And why by guile rather than by persuasion?

Od. He will never listen; and by force thou canst not take him.

Ne. Hath he such dread strength to make him bold?

Od. Shafts inevitable, and winged with death.

Ne. None may dare, then, even to approach that foe?

Od. No, unless thou take him by guile, as I say.

Ne. Thou thinkest it no shame, then, to speak falsehoods?

Od. No, if the falsehood brings deliverance.

Ne. And how shall one have the face to speak those words?

Od. When thy deed promises gain, 'tis unmeet to shrink.

Ne. And what gain is it for me, that he should come to Troy?

Od. With these shafts alone can Troy be taken.

Ne. Then I am not to be the conqueror, as ye said?

Od. Neither thou apart from these, nor these from thee.

Ne. 'Twould seem that we must try to win them, if it stands thus.

Od. Know that, if thou dost this thing, two prizes are thine.

Ne. What are they? Tell me, and I will not refuse the deed.

Od. Thou wilt be called at once wise and valiant.

Ne. Come what may, I'll do it, and cast off all shame.

Od. Art thou mindful, then, of the counsels that I gave?

Ne. Be sure of it—now that once I have consented.

Od. Do thou, then, stay here in wait for him; but I will go away, lest I be espied with thee; and I will send our watcher back to the ship. And, if ye seem to be tarrying at all beyond the due time, I will send that same man hither again, disguised as the captain of a merchant-ship, that secrecy may aid us; and then, my son, as he tells his artful story, take such hints as may help thee from the tenor of his words.

Now I will go to the ship, having left this charge with thee; and may speeding Hermes, the lord of stratagem, lead us on, and Victory, even Athena Polias, who saves me ever!

Exit ODYSSEUS *on the spectators' left.*

The CHORUS *enters and chants the following lines with* NEOPTOLEMUS *responsively.*

Chorus. A stranger in a strange land, what am I to hide, what am I to speak, O Master, before a man who will be swift to think evil? Be thou my guide: his skill excels all other skill, his counsel hath no peer, with whom is the sway of the godlike sceptre given by Zeus. And to thee, my son, that sovereign power hath descended from of old; tell me, therefore, wherein I am to serve thee.

Ne. For the present,—as haply thou wouldst behold the place where he abides on ocean's verge,—survey it fearlessly; but when the dread wayfarer, who hath left this dwelling, shall return, come forward at my beck from time to time, and try to help as the moment may require.

Ch. Long have I been careful of that care, my prince,—that mine eye should be watchful for thy good before all else. And now tell me, in what manner of shelter hath he made his abode? In what region is he? 'Twere not unseasonable for me to learn, lest he surprise me from some quarter. What is the place of his wandering, or of his rest? Where planteth he his steps, within his dwelling, or abroad?

Ne. Here thou seest his home, with its two portals,—his rocky cell.

Ch. And its hapless inmate—whither is he gone?

Ne. I doubt not but he is trailing his painful steps somewhere near this spot, in quest of food. For rumour saith that in this fashion he lives, seeking prey with his winged shafts, all wretched that he is, and no healer of his woe draws nigh unto him.

Ch. I pity him, to think how, with no man to care for him, and seeing no companion's face, suffering, lonely evermore, he is vexed by fierce disease, and bewildered by each want as it arises. How, how doth he endure in his misery? Alas, the dark dealings of the gods! Alas, hapless races of men, whose destiny exceeds due measure!

This man,—noble, perchance, as any scion of the noblest house,—reft of all life's gifts, lies lonely, apart from his fellows, with the dappled or shaggy beasts of the field, piteous alike in his torments and his hunger, bearing anguish that finds no cure; while the mountain nymph, babbling Echo, appearing afar, makes answer to his bitter cries.

Ne. Nought of this is a marvel to me. By heavenly ordinance, if such as I may judge, those first suffer

PHILOCTETES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Odysseus
Neoptolemus
Philoctetes
Merchant *a follower of Neoptolemus in disguise*
Heracles
Chorus of Sailors *belonging to the ship of Neoptolemus*

On the north east coast of Lemnos near the promontory of Mount Hermaeum A rocky cliff rises steeply from the sea shore in it is seen the cave of Philoctetes ODYSSEUS NEOPTOLEMUS *and an attendant enter*

Odysseus This is the shore of the sea girt land of Lemnos untrodden of men and desolate O thou whose sire was the noblest of the Greeks true bred son of Achilles Neoptolemus here long ago I put ashore the Malian the son of Poeas (having charge from my chiefs so to do) his foot all ulcerous with a gnawing sore when neither drink offering nor sacrifice could be attempted by us in peace but with his fierce ill omened cries he filled the whole camp continually shrieking moaning But what need to speak of that? Tis no time for many words lest he learn that I am here and I waste the whole plan whereby I think to take him anon

Come to work! tis for thee to help in what remains and to seek where in this region is a cave with twofold mouth such that in cold weather either front offers a sunny seat but in summer a breeze wafts sleep through the tunnelled grot And a little below on the left hand perchance thou wilt see a spring if it hath not failed

Move thither silently and signify to me whether he still dwells in this same place or is to be sought elsewhere—that so our further course may be explained by me, and heard by thee and sped by the joint work of both

Neoptolemus King Odysseus the task that thou settest lies not far off methinks I see such a cave as thou hast described

Od Above thee or below? I perceive it not

Ne Here high up and of footsteps not a sound

Od Look that he be not lodged there asleep

Ne I see an empty chamber—no man therein

Od And no provision in it for man s abode?

Ne Aye, a mattress of leaves as if for some one who makes his lodging here

Od And all else is bare? Nought else beneath the roof?

Ne Just a rude cup of wood the work of a sorry craftsman and this tinder stuff therewith

Od His is the household store whereof thou tellest

Ne Ha! Yes and here are some ra s withal drying in the sun—stained with matter from some grievous sore

Od The man dwells in these regions clearly and is somewhere not far off how could one go far afield with foot maimed by that inveterate plague? No he hath gone forth in quest of food or of some soothing herb haply that he hath noted somewhere Send thine attendant therefore to keep watch lest the foe come on me unawares for he would rather take me than all the Greeks beside

Ne Enough the man is going and the path shall be watched And now if thou wouldst say more proceed *Exit Attendant on the spectators left*

Od Son of Achilles thou must be loyal to thy mission—and not with thy body alone Should st thou hear some new thing some plan unknown to thee till now thou must help it for to help is thy part here

Ne What is thy bidding?

Od Thou must beguile the mind of Philoctetes by a story told in thy converse with him When he asks thee who and whence thou art say the son of Achilles—there must be no deception touchin that but thou art homeward bound—thou hast left the fleet of the Achaean warriors and hast conceived a deadly hatred for them who when they had moved thee by their prayers to come from home (since this was their only hope of taking Ilium) deemed thee not worthy of the arms of Achilles deigned not to give them to thee when thou camest and didst claim them by right but made them over to Odysseus Of me say what thou wilt the vilest of vile reproaches thou wilt cost me no pang by that but if thou fail to do this deed thou wilt bring sorrow on all our host For if yon man s bow is not to be taken never canst thou sack the realm of Dardanus

And mark why thine intercourse with him may be free from mistrust or danger while mine cannot *Thou* hast come to Troy under no oath to any man and by no constraint nor hadst thou part in the earlier voyage but none of these things can I deny And so if he shall perceive me while he is still master of his bow I am lost and thou as my comrade

in hunger and in misery feeding the plague that is never sated with my flesh.

This have the Atreidae and the proud Odysseus done to me, my son: may the Olympian gods some day give them the like sufferings, in requital for mine!

Ch. Methinks I too pity thee, son of Poeas, in like manner with thy former visitors.

Ne. And I am myself a witness to thy words—I know that they are true; for I have felt the villainy of the Atreidae and the proud Odysseus.

Ph. What, hast thou, too, a grief against the accursed sons of Atreus—a cause to resent ill-usage?

Ne. Oh that it were mine some day to wreak my hatred with my hand, that so Mycenae might learn, and Sparta, that Scyros also is a mother of brave men!

Ph. Well said, my son! Now wherefore hast thou come in this fierce wrath which thou denouncest against them?

Ne. Son of Poeas, I will speak out—and yet 'tis hard to speak—concerning the outrage that I suffered from them at my coming. When fate decreed that Achilles should die—

Ph. Ah me! Tell me no more, until I first know this—sayst thou that the son of Peleus is dead?

Ne. Dead—by no mortal hand, but by a god; laid low, as men say, by the arrow of Phoebus.

Ph. Well, noble alike are the slayer and the slain! I scarce know, my son, which I should do first—inquire into thy wrong, or mourn the dead.

Ne. Methinks thine own sorrows, unhappy man, are enough for thee, without mourning for the woes of thy neighbour.

Ph. Thou sayest truly. Resume thy story, then, and tell me wherein they did thee despite.

Ne. They came for me in a ship with gaily decked prow—prince Odysseus, and he who watched over my father's youth—saying (whether truly or falsely I know not) that, since my father had perished, fate now forbad that the towers of Troy should be taken by any hand but mine.

Saying that these things stood thus, my friend, they made me pause not long ere I set forth in haste, chiefly through my yearning towards the dead, that I might see him before burial—for I had never seen him; then, besides, there was a charm in their promise, if, when I went, I should sack the towers of Troy.

It was now the second day of my voyage, when, sped by breeze and oar, I drew nigh to cruel Sigeum. And when I landed, straightway all the host thronged around me with greetings, vowing that they saw their lost Achilles once more alive.

He, then, lay dead; and I, hapless one, when I had wept for him, presently went to the Atreidae—to friends, as I well might deem—and claimed my father's arms, with all else that had been his. O, 'twas a shameless answer that they made! "Seed of Achilles, thou canst take all else that was thy sire's; but of those arms another man now is lord,—the son of Laertes." The tears came into my eyes; I sprang up in passionate anger, and said in my bitterness, "Wretch! What, have ye dared to give my arms to another man, without my leave?" Then said Odysseus, for he chanced to be near, "Yea, boy, this award of theirs is just; I saved the arms and their master at his need." Then straightway, in my fury, I began to hurl all manner of taunts at him, and spared not one, if I was indeed to be robbed of my arms by him. At this point—stung by the abuse, though not prone to wrath—he answered, "Thou wast not here with us, but absent from thy duty. And since thou must talk so saucily, thou shalt never carry those arms back to Scyros."

Thus upbraided, thus insulted, I sail for home, despoiled of mine own by that worst offspring of an evil breed, Odysseus. And yet he, I think, is less to blame than the rulers. For an army, like a city, hangs wholly on its leaders; and when men do lawless deeds, 'tis the counsel of their teachers that corrupts them. My tale is told; and may the foe of the Atreidae have the favour of Heaven, as he hath mine!

Ch. Goddess of the hills, all-fostering Earth, mother of Zeus most high, thou through whose realm the great Pactolus rolls golden sands—there also, dread Mother, I called upon thy name, when all the insults of the Atreidae were being heaped upon this man,—when they were giving his sire's armour, that peerless marvel, to the son of Laertes—hear it, thou immortal one, who ridest on bull-slaughtering lions!

Ph. It seems that ye have come to me, friends, well commended by a common grief; and your story is of like strain with mine, so that I can recognise the work of the Atreidae and of Odysseus. For well I know that he would lend his tongue to any base pretext, to any villainy, if thereby he could hope to compass some dishonest end. No, 'tis not at this that I wonder, but rather that the elder Ajax, if he was there, could endure to see it.

Ne. Ah, friend, he was no more; I should never have been thus plundered while he lived.

Ph. How sayest thou? What, is he, too, dead and gone?

Ne. Think of him as of one who sees the light no more.

Ph. Woe is me! But the son of Tydeus, and the offspring of Sisyphus that was bought by Laertes—they will not die; for they ought not to live.

Ne. Not they, be sure of it; no, they are now prospering full greatly in the Argive host.

Ph. And what of my brave old friend, Nestor of Pylos—is he not alive? Their mischiefs were often baffled by his wise counsels.

Ne. Ay, he has trouble now; death has taken Antilochus, the son that was at his side.

Ph. Ah me! These two, again, whom thou hast named, are men of whose death I had least wished to hear. Alas! What are we to look for, when these have died, and, here again, Odysseus lives—when he, in their place, should have been numbered with the dead?

ings came on him from relentless Chrysè and the woes that now he bears with none to tend him surely he bears by the providence of some god that so he should not bend against Troy the resistless shafts divine till the time be fulfilled when as men say Troy is fated by those shafts to fall

Ch Hush peace my son!

Ne What now?

Ch A sound rose on the air such as might haunt the lips of a man in weary pain From this point it came I think—or this It smites it smites indeed upon my ear—the voice of one who creeps painfully on his way I cannot mistake that grievous cry of human anguish from afar—its accents are too clear

Then turn thee O my son—

Ne Say whither?

Ch —to new counsels for the man is not far off but near not with music of the reed he cometh like shepherd in the pastures—no but with far sounding moan as he stumbles perchance from stress of pain or as he gazes on the haven that hath no ship for guest loud is his cry and dread

Enter PHILOCTETES *on the spectators right*

Philoctetes O strangers!

Who may ye be and from what country have ye put into this land that is harbourless and desolate? What should I deem to be your city or your race?

The fashion of your garb is Greek—most welcome to my sight—but I fain would hear your speech and do not shrink from me in fear or be scared by my wild looks nay in pity for one so wretched and lonely for a sufferer so desolate and so friendless speak to me if indeed ye have come as friends Oh answer! Tis not meet that I should fail of this at least from you or ye from me

Ne Then know this first good Sir that we are Greeks—since thou art fain to learn that

Ph O well loved sound! Ah that I should indeed be greeted by such a man after so long a time! What quest my son hath drawn thee towards these shores and to this spot? What enterprise? What kindliest of winds? Speak tell me all that I may know who thou art

Ne My birthplace is the sea girt Scyros I am sailing homeward Achilles was my sire my name is Neoptolemus thou knowest all

Ph O son of well loved father and dear land foster child of aged Lycomedes on what errand hast thou touched this coast? Whence art thou sailing?

Ne Well it is from Ilium that I hold my present course

Ph What? Thou wast not certainly our shipmate at the beginning of the voyage to Ilium

Ne Hadst thou indeed a part in that emprise?

Ph O my son then thou knowest not who is before thee?

Ne How should I know one whom I have never seen before?

Ph Then thou hast not even heard my name or any rumour of those miseries by which I was perishing?

Ne Be assured that I know nothing of what thou askest

Ph O wretched indeed that I am O abhorred of heaven that no word of this my plight should have won its way to my home or to any home of Greeks! No the men who wickedly cast me out keep their secret and laugh while my plague still rejoices in its strength and grows to more!

O my son O boy whose father was Achilles behold I am he of whom haply thou hast heard as lord of the bow of Heracles—I am the son of Poeas, Philoctetes whom the two chieftains and the Cephallenian king foully cast upon this solitude when I was wasting with a fierce disease stricken down by the furious bite of the destroying serpent with that plague for sole companion O my son those men put me out here and were gone when from sea girt Chrysè they touched at this coast with their fleet. Glad then when they saw me asleep—after much tossing on the waves—in the shelter of a cave upon the shore they abandoned me—first putting out a few rags, good enough for such a wretch, and a scanty dole of food withal may Heaven give them the like!

Think now my son think what a waking was mine when they had gone and I rose from sleep that day! What bitter tears started from mine eyes, what miseries were those that I bewailed when I saw that the ships with which I had sailed were all gone and that there was no man in the place not one to help not one to ease the burden of the sickness that vexed me when looking all around I could find no provision save for anguish—but of that a plenteous store my son!

So time went on for me season by season and alone in this narrow house I was fain to meet each want by mine own service For hunger s needs this bow provided bringing down the winged doves and whatever my string sped shaft might strike I hapless one would crawl to it myself trailing my wretched foot just so far or if again water had to be fetched—or if (when the frost was out perchance as oft in winter) a bit of fire wood had to be broken I would creep forth poor wretch and manage it Then fire would be lacking but by rubbing stone on stone I would at last draw forth the hidden spark and this it is that keeps life in me from day to day Indeed a roof over my head and fire therewith gives all that I want—save release from my disease

Come now my son thou must learn what manner of isle this is No mariner approaches it by choice there is no anchorage there is no sea port where he can find a gainful market or a kindly welcome This is not a place to which prudent men make voyages Well suppose that some one has put in against his will such things may oft happen in the long course of a man s life These visitors when they come have compassionate words for me and perchance moved by pity they give me a little food or some raiment but there is one thing that no one will do when I speak of it—take me safe home no this is now the tenth year that I am wearing out my wretched days,

a of thy crew, I resolved not to go on my voyage in silence, without first giving thee my news, and reaping the guerdon due. Thou knowest nothing, I suspect, of thine own affairs—the new designs that the Greeks have regarding thee,—nay, not designs mere, but deeds in progress, and no longer tarrying.

Ne. Truly, Sir, the grace shown me by thy forethought, if I be not unworthy, shall live in my grateful thoughts. But tell me just what it is whereof thou hast spoken,—that I may learn what strange design on the part of the Greeks thou announcest to me.

Me. Pursuers have started in quest of thee with ships,—the aged Phoenix and the sons of Theseus.

Ne. To bring me back by force, or by fair words?

Me. I know not; but I have come to tell thee what I have heard.

Ne. Can Phoenix and his comrades be showing such zeal on such an errand, to please the Atreidae?

Me. The errand is being done, I can assure thee,—and without delay.

Ne. Why, then, was not Odysseus ready to sail for this purpose, and to bring the message himself? Or did some fear restrain him?

Me. Oh, he and the son of Tydeus were setting forth in pursuit of another man, as I was leaving port.

Ne. Who was this, in quest of whom Odysseus himself was sailing?

Me. There was a man.... But tell me first who that is yonder,—and whatever thou sayest, speak not loud.

Ne. Sir, thou seest the renowned Philoctetes.

Me. Ask me no more, then, but convey thyself with all speed out of this land.

Ph. What is he saying, my son? Why is the sailor trafficking with thee about me in these dark whispers?

Ne. I know not his meaning yet; but whatever he would say he must say openly to thee and me and these.

Me. Seed of Achilles, do not accuse me to the army of saying what I should not; I receive *many* benefits from them for my services,—as a poor man may.

Ne. I am the foe of the Atreidae, and this man is my best friend, because he hates them. Since, then, thou hast come with a *kindly* purpose towards me, thou must not keep from us any part of the tidings that thou hast heard.

Me. See what thou doest, my son.

Ne. I am well aware.

Me. I will hold thee accountable.

Ne. Do so, but speak.

Me. I obey. 'Tis in quest of this man that those two are sailing whom I named to thee,—the son of Tydeus and mighty Odysseus,—sworn to bring him, either by winning words or by constraining force. And all the Achaeans heard this plainly from Odysseus,—for his confidence of success was higher than his comrade's.

Ne. And wherefore, after so long a time, did the Atreidae turn their thoughts towards this man, whom long since they had cast forth? What was the yearning that came to them,—what compulsion, or what vengeance from gods who requite evil deeds?

Me. I can expound all that to thee,—since it seems that thou hast not heard it. There was a seer of noble birth, a son of Priam, by name Helenus; whom this man, going forth by night,—this guileful Odysseus, of whom all shameful and dishonouring words are spoken,—made his prisoner; and, leading him in bonds, showed him publicly to the Achaeans, a goodly prize; who then prophesied to them whatso else they asked, and that they should never sack the towers of Troy, unless by winning words they should bring this man from the island whereon he now dwells.

And the son of Laertes, when he heard the seer speak thus, straightway promised that he would bring this man and show him to the Achaeans,—most likely, he thought, as a willing captive, but, if reluctant, then by force; adding that, should he fail in this, whoso wished might have his head. Thou hast heard all, my son; and I commend speed to thee and to any man for whom thou carest.

Ph. Hapless that I am! Hath he, that utter pest, sworn to bring me by persuasion to the Achaeans? As soon shall I be persuaded, when I am dead, to come up from Hades to the light, as his father *came*!

Me. I know nothing about that: but I *must go to* ship, and may Heaven be with you both for all good.

Exit MERCHANT.

Ph. Now is not this wondrous, my son, that the offspring of Laertes should have hoped, by means of soft words, to lead me forth from his ship and show *me* amid the Greeks? No! sooner would I hearken to that deadliest of *my* foes, the *viper* which made me the cripple that I am! But there is nothing that *he* would not say, or dare; and now I know that he will be here. Come, my son, let us be moving, that a wide sea may part us from the ship of Odysseus. Let us go: good speed in good season brings sleep and rest, when toil is o'er.

Ne. We will sail, then, as soon as the head-wind falls; at present it is adverse.

Ph. 'Tis ever fair sailing, when thou fleest from evil.

Ne. Nay, but this weather is against them also.

Ph. No wind comes amiss to pirates, when there is a chance to steal, or to rob by force.

Ne. Well, let us be going, if thou wilt,—when thou hast taken from within what thou needest or desirest most.

Ph. Aye, there are some things that I need,—though the choice is not large.

Ne. What is there that will not be found on board my ship?

Ph. I keep by me a certain herb, wherewith I can best assuage this wound, till it is wholly soothed.

Ne. Fetch it, then. Now, what else wouldst thou take?

Ne A clever wrestler he but even clever schemes Philoctetes are often tripped up

Ph Now tell me I pray thee where was Patroclus in this thy need—*he whom thy father loved so well?*

Ne He too was dead And to be brief I would tell thee this—war takes no evil man by choice but good men always

Ph I bear thee witness and for that same reason I will ask thee how fares a man of little worth but shrewd of tongue and clever—

Ne Surely this will be no one but Odysseus?

Ph I meant not him but there was one Thersites who could never be content with brief speech though all men chafed Know st thou if he is alive?

Ne I saw him not but heard that he still lives

Ph It was his due No evil thing has been known to perish no the gods take tender care of such and have a strange joy in turning back from Hades all things villainous and knavish while they are ever sending the just and the good out of life How am I to deem of these things or wherein shall I praise *them when praising the ways of the gods I find* that the gods are evil?

Ne Son of Oetean sire I at least shall be on my guard henceforth against Ilium and the Atreidae nor look on them save from afar and where the worse man is stronger than the good—where honesty fails and the dastard bears sway—among such men will I never make my friends No rocky Scyros shall suffice for me henceforth nor shall I ask a better home

Now to my ship! And thou son of Poeas farewell —*heartily farewell and the gods deliver thee from* thy sickness even as thou wouldst! But we must be going so that we may set forth whenever the god permits our voyage

Ph Do ye start now my son?

Ne Aye prudence bids us watch the weather near our ship rather than from afar

Ph Now by thy father and by thy mother my son—by all that is dear to thee in thy home—solemnly I implore thee, leave me not thus forlorn helpless amid these miseries in which I live such as *thou seest and many as thou hast heard! Nay spare* a passing thought to me Great is the discomfort I well know of such a freight yet bear with it to noble minds baseness is hateful and a good deed is glorious Forsake this task and thy fair name is sullied perform it my son and a rich meed of glory will be thine if I return alive to Oeta s land Come the trouble lasts not one whole day make the effort —take and thrust me where thou wilt in hold in prow in stern wherever I shall least annoy my shipmates

O consent by the great Zeus of suppliants my son—be persuaded! I supplicate thee on my knees infirm as I am poor wretch and maimed! Nay leave me not thus desolate far from the steps of men! Nay bring me safely to thine *own home or* to Euboea Chalcodon s seat and thence it will be no long journey for me to Oeta and the Trachinian heights and the fair flowing Spercheius that thou mayest show me to my beloved sire of whom I have long feared that he may have gone from me For often did I summon him by those who came with *imploring prayers that he would himself send a ship* and fetch me home But either he is dead or else methinks my messengers—as was likely—made small account of my concerns and hastened on their homeward voyage

Now however—since in thee I have found one who can carry at once my message and myself—do *thou save me do thou show me mercy seein how* all human destiny is full of the fear and the peril that good fortune may be followed by evil He who stands clear of trouble should beware of dangers and when a man lives at ease then it is that he should look most closely to his life lest ruin come on it by stealth

Ch Have pity O king he hath told of a struggle with sufferings manifold and grievous may the like befall no friend of mine! And if my prince thou hatest the hateful Atreidae then turnin their misdeed *to this man s gain I would waft him in thy* good swift ship to the home for which he yearns, that so thou flee the just wrath of Heaven

Ne Beware lest though now as a spectator thou art pliant yet when wearied of his malady by consorting with it thou be found no longer constant to these words

Ch No verily never shalt thou have cause to utter that reproach against me!

Ne Nay then it were shame that the stranger should find me less prompt than thou art to serve *him at his need Come if it please you let us sail* let the man set forth at once our ship for her part will carry him and will not refuse Only may the gods convey us safely out of this land and hence to our haven wheresoever it be!

Ph O most joyful day! O kindest friend—and ye good sailors—would that I could prove to you in deeds what love ye have won from me! Let us be going my son when thou and I have made a solemn farewell to the homeless home within —that thou mayest even learn by what means I sustained life, *and how stout a heart hath been mine For I be*lieve that the bare sight would have deterred any other man from enduring such a lot but I have been slowly schooled by necessity to patience

(NEOPTOLEMUS *is about to follow* PHILOCTETES *into the cave*)

Ch Stay let us give heed two men are coming, one a seaman of thy ship the other a stranger ye should hear their tidings before ye go in

Enter MERCHANT *on the spectators left accompanied by a Sailor*

Merchant Son of Achilles I asked my companion here—who with two others, was guarding thy ship —to tell me where thou mightest be since I have fallen in with thee when I did not expect it by the *chance of coming to anchor off the same coast* Sailing in trader s wise with no great company homeward bound from Ilium to Peparethus with its cluster laden vines when I heard that the sailors were

that in no wise, willingly or unwillingly, thou give up this bow to them—lest thou bring destruction at once on thyself and on me, who am thy suppliant.

Ne. Have no fears as to my caution. The bow shall pass to no hands but thine and mine. Give it to me, and may good luck come with it!

Ph. There it is, my son: and pray the jealous gods that it may not bring thee troubles, such as it brought to me and to him who was its lord before me.

Ne. Ye gods, grant this to us twain! Grant us a voyage prosperous and swift, whithersoever the god approves and our purpose tends!

Ph. Nay, my son, I fear that thy prayers are vain; for lo, once more the dark blood oozes drop by drop from the depths, and I look for worse to come. Ah me, oh, oh! Thou hapless foot, what torment wilt thou work for me! It creeps on me, it is drawing near. Woe, woe is me! Ye know it now: flee not, I pray you!

O Cephallenian friend, would that this anguish might cleave to thee, and transfix thy breast! Ah me! Ah me! O ye chieftains twain, Agamemnon, Menelaus, would that ye, instead of me, had to endure this malady, even you, and for as long! Ah me, ah me! O Death, Death, when I am thus ever calling thee, day by day, why canst thou never come? O my son, generous youth, come, seize me, burn me up, true-hearted friend, in yonder fire, famed as Lemnian: I too, once deemed it lawful to do the same unto the son of Zeus, for the meed of these same arms, which are now in thy keeping. What sayest thou, boy, what sayest thou? Why art thou silent? Where are thy thoughts, my son?

Ne. I have long been grieving in my heart for thy load of pain.

Ph. Nay, my son, have good hope withal; this visitor comes sharply, but goes quickly. Only, I beseech thee, leave me not alone.

Ne. Fear not, we will remain.

Ph. Thou wilt remain?

Ne. Be sure of it.

Ph. Well, I do not ask to put thee on thine oath, my son.

Ne. Rest satisfied: 'tis not lawful for me to go without thee.

Ph. Thy hand for pledge!

Ne. I give it—to stay.

Ph. Now take me yonder, yonder—

Ne. Whither meanest thou?

Ph. Up yonder—

Ne. What is this new frenzy? Why gazest thou on the vault above us?

Ph. Let me go, let me go!

Ne. Whither?

Ph. Let me go, I say!

Ne. I will not.

Ph. Thou wilt kill me, if thou touch me.

Ne. There, then—I release thee, since thou art calmer.

Ph. O Earth, receive me as I die, here and now! This pain no longer suffers me to stand erect.

Ne. Methinks sleep will come to him ere long: see, his head sinks backward; yes, a sweat is bathing his whole body, and a thin stream of dark blood hath broken forth from his heel.

Come, friends, let us leave him in quietness, that he may fall on slumber.

Ch. Sleep, stranger to anguish, painless Sleep, come, at our prayer, with gentle breath, come with benison, O king, and keep before his eyes such light as is spread before them now; come, I pray thee, come with power to heal!

O son, bethink thee where thou wilt stand, and to what counsels thou wilt next turn our course. Thou seest how 'tis now! Why should we delay to act? Opportunity, arbiter of all action, oft wins a great victory by one swift stroke.

Ne. Nay, though he hears nothing, I see that in vain have we made this bow our prize, if we sail without him. His must be the crown; 'tis he that the god bade us bring. 'Twere a foul shame for us to boast of deeds in which failure hath waited on fraud.

Ch. Nay, my son, the god will look to that. But when thou answerest me again, softly, softly whisper thy words, my son: for sick men's restless sleep is ever quick of vision.

But, I pray thee, use thine utmost care to win that prize, that great prize, by stealth. For if thou maintain thy present purpose toward this man—thou knowest of what purpose I speak—a prudent mind can foresee troubles most grievous.

Now, my son, now the wind is fair for thee: sightless and helpless, the man lies stretched in darkness—sleep in the heat is sound—with no command of hand or foot, but reft of all his powers, like unto one who rests with Hades.

Take heed, look if thy counsels be seasonable: so far as my thoughts can seize the truth, my son, the best strategy is that which gives no alarm.

Ne. Hush, I say, and let not your wits forsake you: yon man opens his eyes, and lifts his head.

Ph. Ah, sunlight following on sleep, ah, ye friendly watchers, undreamed of by my hopes! Never, my son, could I have dared to look for this—that thou shouldest have patience to wait so tenderly upon my sufferings, staying beside me and helping to relieve me. The Atreidae certainly, those valiant chieftains, had no heart to bear this burden so lightly. But thy nature, my son, is noble, and of noble breed; and so thou hast made little of all this, though loud cries and noisome odours vexed thy senses.

And now, since the plague seems to allow me a space of forgetfulness and peace at last, raise me thyself, my son, set me on my feet, so that, when the faintness shall at length release me, we may set forth to the ship, and delay not to sail.

Ne. Right glad am I to see thee beyond my hope, living and breathing, free from pain: for, judged by the sufferings that afflict thee, thy symptoms seemed to speak of death. But now lift thyself; or, if thou prefer it, these men will carry thee: the trouble

Ph Any of these arrows that may have been forgotten and may have slipped away from me—lest I leave it to be another s prize

Ne Is that indeed the famous bow which thou art holding?

Ph This and no other that I carry in my hand

Ne Is it lawful for me to have a nearer view of it—to handle it and to salute it as a god?

Ph To thee my son this shall be granted and anything else in my power that is for thy good

Ne I certainly long to touch it but my longing is on this wise if it be lawful I should be glad if not think no more of it

Ph Thy words are reverent and thy wish my son is lawful for thou alone hast given to mine eyes the light of life—the hope to see the Oetean land to see mine aged father and my friends—thou who when I lay beneath the feet of my foes hast lifted me beyond their reach Be of good cheer the bow shall be thine to handle and to return to the hand that gave it thou shalt be able to vaunt that in reward of thy kindness thou alone of mortals hast touched it for twas by a good deed that I myself won it

Ne I rejoice to have found thee and to have gained thy friendship for whosoever knows how to render benefit for benefit must prove a friend above price Go in I pray thee

Ph Yes and I will lead thee in for my sick estate craves the comfort of thy presence

They enter the cave

Chorus

I have heard in story but seen not with mine eyes how he who once came near the bed of Zeus was bound upon a swift wheel by the almighty son of Cronus but of no other mortal know I by hearsay or by sight that hath encountered a doom so dreadful as this man s who though he had wronged none by force or fraud but lived at peace with his fellow men was left to perish thus cruelly

Verily I marvel how as he listened in his solitude to the surges that beat around him he kept his hold upon a life so full of woe

where he was neighbour to himself alone—powerless to walk—with no one in the land to be near him while he suffered in whose ear he could pour forth the lament awaking response for the plague that gnawed his flesh and drained his blood no one to assuage the burning flux oozing from the ulcers of his envenomed foot with healing herbs gathered from the bounteous earth so often as the torment came upon him

Then would he creep this way or that with painful steps like a child without kindly nurse to any place whence his need might be supplied whenever the devouring anguish abated

gathering not for food the fruit of holy Earth nor aught else that we mortals gain by toil save when haply he found wherewith to stay his hunger by winged shafts from his swift smiting bow Ah joyless was his life who for ten years never knew the gladness of the wine cup but still bent his way towards any stagnant pool that he could descry as he gazed around him

But now after those troubles he shall be happy and mighty at the last for he hath met with the son of a noble race who in the fulness of many months bears him on sea cleaving ship to his home haunt of Malian nymphs and to the banks of the Spercheius where above Oeta s heights the lord of the brazen shield drew near to the gods, amid the splendour of the lightnings of his sire

NEOPTOLEMUS *and* PHILOCTETES *enter from the cave*

Ne I pray thee come on Why art thou so silent? Why dost thou halt as if dismayed without a cause?

Ph Alas alas!

Ne What is the matter?

Ph Nothing serious—go on my son

Ne Art thou in pain from the disease that vexes thee?

Ph No indeed—no I think I am better just now Ye gods!

Ne Why groanest thou thus and callest on the gods?

Ph That they may come to us with power to save and soothe Ah me! ah me!

Ne What ails thee? Speak—persist not in this silence tis plain that something is amiss with thee

Ph I am lost my son—I can never hide my trouble from you ah it pierces me it pierces! O misery O wretched that I am! I am undone my son—it devours me Oh for the gods love if thou hast a sword ready to thy hand strike at my heel shear it off straightway—heed not my life! Quick quick my son!

Ne And what new thing hath come on thee so suddenly that thou bewailest thyself with such loud laments?

Ph Thou knowest my son

Ne What is it?

Ph Thou knowest boy

Ne What is the matter with thee? I know not

Ph How canst thou help knowing? Oh oh!

Ne Dread indeed is the burden of the malady

Ph Aye dread beyond telling Oh pity me!

Ne What shall I do?

Ph Forsake me not in fear This visitant comes but now and then—when she hath been sated haply with her roamings

Ne Ah hapless one! Hapless indeed art thou found in all manner of woe! Shall I take hold of thee or lend thee a helping hand?

Ph No no but take this bow of mine I pray thee—as thou didst ask of me just now—and keep it safe till this present access of my disease is past For indeed sleep falls on me when this plague is passing away nor can the pain cease sooner but ye must allow me to slumber in peace And if meanwhile those men come I charge thee by Heaven

Pe. What! thou basest and boldest of villains—and three men to take me by force?

Od. [illegible] thou come of thy free will.

P. O Lemnian land [illegible] that all conquering flame whose kindler is Hephaestus—is this indeed to be borne, that [illegible] man should take me from thy realm by force?

Od. 'Tis Zeus, let me tell thee, Zeus, who rules this land—Zeus, whose pleasure this is; and I am his servant.

Ph. Hateful wretch, what pleas thou canst invent! Sheltering thyself behind gods, thou makest those gods liars.

Od. [illegible] true prophets. Our march must begin.

Ph. Never!

Od. But I say Yes. There is no help for it.

Ph. Woe is me! Plainly, then, my father begat me to be a slave and no free man.

Od. Nay, but to be the peer of the bravest, with whom thou art destined to take Troy by storm, and raze it to the dust.

Ph. No, never—though I must suffer the worst—while I have this steep crags beneath me!

Od. What wouldst thou do?

P. Throw myself straightway from the rock and shatter this head upon the rock below.

Od. Seize him, both of you! Put it out of his power!

Ph. Ah, hands, how ill ye fare, for lack of the bow that ye loved to draw—in yon man's close prisoners! O thou who canst not think one honest or one generous thought, how hast thou once more stolen upon me, how hast thou snared me—taking this boy for thy screen, [illegible] to me, too good for thy company, but meet for mine, who has no thought but to perform thy bidding, and who already showeth [illegible] how he rues his own errors and the wrongs. But thy base soul, ever peering from some ambush, had [illegible] trained him [illegible] as he was [illegible] to be [illegible].

And now, wretch, thou purposest to bind me hand and foot, and take me from this shore where thou didst fling me forth, friendless, helpless, homeless—dead among the living.

Alas!

Perdition seize thee! So have I often prayed for thee. But, since the gods grant nothing sweet to me, thou livest and art glad, while I [illegible] is pain that I am [illegible] in misery—[illegible] mocked by thee and by the sons of Atreus, thy two masters, for whom thou dost this errand. Yet thou sailedst with them only when brought under their yoke by [illegible] stratagem and [illegible], but I—thrice wretched that I am—came unforced, with my own accord, with seven ships, and [illegible] was spurned and cast out—by thee, as thou sayest, or, as they say, by thee.

And now, why would ye take me? Why carry me [illegible] for what purpose? I am nought; for you, I have long been dead. Wretch abhorred of heaven, how is it that thou no longer findest me lame and noisome? How, if I sail with you, can ye burn sacrifices to the gods, or make drink-offerings any more? That was thy pretext for casting me forth.

Miserable may ye perish! and perish ye shall, for the wrong that ye have wrought against me, if the gods regard justice. But I know that they regard it; for ye would never have come on this voyage in quest of one so wretched, unless some heaven-sent yearning for me had goaded you on.

O my fatherland, and ye watchful gods, bring your vengeance, bring your vengeance on them all, —at last, though late—if ye see aught to pity! Yes, a piteous life is mine; but, if I saw those men overthrown, I could dream that I was delivered from my plague.

Ch. Bitter with his soul's bitterness are these stranger's words, Odysseus; he bends not before his woes.

Od. I could answer him at length, if leisure served; but now I can say one thing only. Such as the time needs, such am I. Where the question is of just men and good, thou wilt find no man more scrupulous. Victory, however, is my aim in every field—save with regard to thee—to thee, in this case, I will gladly give way.

Yes, release him, lay no finger upon him more—let him stay here. Indeed, we have no further need of thee, now that these arms are ours; for Teucer is there to serve us, well skilled in this craft, and I, who deem that I can wield this bow no whit worse than thou, and point it with as true a hand. What need, then, of thee? Pace thy Lemnos, and joy be with thee! We must be gone. And perchance thy treasure will bring to me the honour which ought to have been thine own.

Ph. Ah, unhappy that I am, what shall I do? Shalt thou be seen among the Argives graced with the arms that are mine?

Od. Bandy no more speech with me—I am going.

P. Son of Achilles, wilt thou, too, speak no more to me, but depart without a word?

Od. (to NEOPTOLEMUS) Come on! Do not look at him, generous though thou art, lest thou mar our fortune.

Ph. (to CHORUS) Will ye also, friends, indeed leave me thus desolate, and show no pity?

Ch. This youth is our commander; whatsoever he saith to thee, that answer is ours also.

N. (to CHORUS) I shall be told by my chief that I am too soft-hearted. Yet tarry here, if yon man will have it so, until the sailors have made all ready on board, and we have offered our prayers to the gods. Meanwhile, perhaps, he may come to a better mind concerning us. So we two will be gone; and when we call you, are ye to set forth with speed.

Exeunt ODYSSEUS *and* NEOPTOLEMUS.

P. Thou hollow of the caverned rock, now hot, now icy cold—so, then, it was my hapless destiny never to leave thee! No, thou art to witness my death also. Woe, woe is me! Ah, thou sad dwelling, so long haunted by the pain of my presence, what shall be my daily portion henceforth? Where and whence, wretched that I am, shall I find a hope of sustenance? Above my head, the timorous doves

would not be grudged since thou and I are of one mind

Ph Thanks my son—and help me to rise as thou sayest but do not trouble these men that they may not suffer from the noisome smell before the time It will be trial enough for them to live on board with me

Ne So be it Now stand up and take hold of me thyself

Ph *Fear not the old habit will help me to my feet*

Ne Alack! What am I to do next!

Ph What is the matter my son? Whither strays thy speech?

Ne I know not how I should turn my faltering words

Ph Faltering? Wherefore? Say not so my son

Ne Indeed perplexity has now brought me to that pass

Ph It cannot be that the offence of my disease *hath changed thy purpose of receiving me in thy ship?*

Ne All is offence when a man hath forsaken his true nature and is doing what doth not befit him

Ph Nay thou at least art not departing from thy sire s example in word or deed by helping one who deserves it

Ne I shall be found base this is the thought that torments me

Ph Not in thy present deeds but the presage of *thy words disquiets me*

Ne O Zeus what shall I do? Must I be found twice a villain—by disloyal silence as well as by shameful speech?

Ph If my judgment errs not yon man means to betray me and forsake me and go his way!

Ne Forsake thee—no but take thee perchance on a bitter voyage—that is the pain that haunts me

Ph What meanest thou my son? I understand not

Ne *I will tell thee all Thou must sail to Troy* to the Achaeans and the host of the Atreidae

Ph Oh what hast thou said?

Ne Lament not till thou learn—

Ph Learn what? What wouldst thou do to me?

Ne Save thee first from this misery—then go and ravage Troy s plains with thee

Ph *And this is indeed thy purpose?*

Ne A stern necessity ordains it be not wroth to hear it

Ph I am lost hapless one—betrayed! What hast thou done unto me stranger? Restore my bow at once!

Ne Nay I cannot duty and policy alike constrain me to obey my chiefs

Ph Thou fire thou utter monster thou hateful masterpiece of subtle villainy—how hast thou dealt with me how hast thou deceived me! And thou art not ashamed to look upon me thou wretch—the suppliant who turned to thee for pity? In taking my bow thou hast despoiled me of my life Restore it I beseech thee—restore it *I implore thee my son!* By the gods of thy fathers do not rob me of my life! Ah me! No—he speaks to me no more he looks away—he will not give it up!

O ye creeks and headlands O ye wild creatures of the hills with whom I dwell O ye steep cliffs! to you—for to whom else can I speak?—to you my wonted listeners I bewail my treatment by the son of Achilles he swore to convey me home—to Troy he carries me he clinched his word with the pledge of his right hand —yet hath he taken my bow—the sacred bow once borne by Heracles son of Zeus—and keeps it and would fain show it to the Argives as his own

He drags me away as if he had captured a strong man and sees not that he is slaying a corpse the shadow of a vapour a mere phantom In my strength he would not have taken me—no nor as I am save by guile But now I have been tricked unhappy that I am What shall I do? Nay give it back—return even now to thy true self! What sayest thou? *Silent? Woe is me I am lost!*

Ah thou cave with twofold entrance familiar to mine eyes once more must I return to thee—but disarmed and without the means to live Yes in yon chamber my lonely life shall fade away no winged bird no beast that roams the hills shall I slay with yonder bow rather I myself wretched one shall make a feast for those who fed me and become a prey to those on whom I preyed alas, I shall render my life blood for the blood which I have *shed—the victim of a man who seemed innocent of* evil! Perish! no not yet till I see if thou wilt still change thy purpose if thou wilt not mayest thou die accursed!

Ch What shall we do? It now rests with thee O prince whether we sail or hearken to yon man s prayer

Ne *A strange pity for him hath smitten my heart —and not now for the first time but long ago*

Ph *Show mercy my son for the love of the gods and do not give men cause to reproach thee for having ensnared me*

Ne Ah me what shall I do? Would I had never left Scyros! so grievous is my plight

Ph Thou art no villain but thou seemest to have come hither as one schooled by villains to a base part Now leave that part to others whom it befits, *and sail hence —when thou hast given me back mine* arms

Ne What shall we do friends?

ODYSSEUS *appears suddenly from behind the cave*

Od *Wretch what art thou doing? Back with thee —and give up this bow to me!*

Ph Ah who is this? Do I hear Odysseus?

Od *Odysseus be sure of it—me whom thou beholdest*

Ph Ah me I am betrayed—lost! He it was then that entrapped me and robbed me of mine arms

Od I surely and no other I avow it

Ph Give back my bow—give it up my son

Od That shall he never do even if he would And *moreover thou must come along with it or they* will bring thee by force

Od What wilt thou do? A strange fear comes over me..

Ne —from whom I took th bow t him again—

Od Zeus! what would st thou say? Thou wilt not give it back?

Ne Yea I ha e g tten it basely and without ri ht

Od In the name of the gods, sayest thou this to mock me?

Ne If t be mockery to speak the truth

Od What meanest thou, son of Achilles? What hast thou sa d?

Ne Must I repeat the same words twice and thrice?

Od I should hav wished not to hear them at all

Ne Rest assured that I ha e nothin *more to say*

Od There is a po er I tell thee that shall pre ent thy deed

Ne What meanest thou? Who is t hinder me in this?

Od The whole host of the Achaeans—and I for one.

Ne Wise though thou be thy words are void of wisdom.

Od Thy peech is i w se nor yet thy purpose

Ne But if just that is better tha wise

Od And how is t just to g p what thou hast won by my counsels?

Ne My fault hath been shameful, and I must seek to retrie it.

Od Ha t thou no fear of the Achaean host, in doing this

Ne W th justice on my side I do not fear thy terr rs

Od B t I ll compel thee

Ne N y ot even to thy f rce do I ield obed ence

Od Th n we shall fi ht, not w th the Trojans, but th thee

Ne Come th n what must

Od Seest thou my i ht ha d on my ord hilt?

Ne N tho shalt see me d ng the same and that promptly

Od W ll, I ll take no mo heed of thee but I ll go nd tell this to all the host and by them thou shalt be pu shed

Ne Thou ha t come t thy senses and if thou art thus prud nt hence forth, pe han e thou ma est keep cle f troubl *Exit* ODYS EU

But thou, O son f Poeas, Ph loctetes, c m forth, lea e th sh lt of th ocky home!

Ph (*Ne*) What means th s noise of oices ne mo e tha beside my ca e?

Why d you call me forth? What w uld ha of m rs? (H *pe s at th mouth f the cave and see* ODYSSEUS) Ah me! the bodes no good Can ye ha ome as herald of new woes fo me to crown th al

Ne Fear n t, but hearken to the words that I bring

Ph I m afraid Fair words brou ht m al for t ne bef r hen I bel eved thy promises.

Ne I th re no room then for repentance ?

Ph E en such wast thou in speec when seeking to steal my bow—a trusty friend with treason in his heart

Ne But not so now and I fa n would learn whether thy resol e is to ab de here and endure, or to sail with us.

Ph Stop speak no mo e! All that thou canst say will be sa d in ain

Ne Thou art resolved?

Ph M re firmly belie e me than peech can tell

Ne W ll I could ha e wished that thou hadst listened to my words but if I peak not in season I ha e done

Ph A e thou w lt say all *in vain*

Never canst thou win the amity of my soul thou who hast taken th stay of my life by fraud and robbed me of it— nd then ha t come here to gi e me counsel—th u most hateful off pring of a noble sire! Perd tion seize you all the Atreidae first and next the son of Laertes, and th e!

Ne Utter no mo e curses b t recei e these weapons from my hand

Ph What sayest thou? Am I being tricked a second t me?

Ne No I swear it by the pure majesty of Zeus most h gh!

Ph O wel ome wo ds—if thy words be true!

Ne The deed shall soon pro e the word come, stretch forth thy right hand and be master of thy bow!

As he ha ds the bo a d ... *rrou s to* PHILOCTETES O YSSEUS *suddenly a p ar*

Od But I forb d it—be the gods my witnesses—in the name f th Atre dae and all the host!

Ph My son whose voice was that? D d I hear Odysseus?

Od Be sure of it—and th u seest him at thy side who w ll carry thee to the plains of Troy perforce whether th son of Achilles will or no.

Ph But to thy cost if this ar w fly straight (*Bends his bow*)

Ne (*seiz g h s arm*) Ah f r the god lo e forbear—launch n t thy shaft!

Ph Unhand me, in Hea en s name dear youth!

Ne I ll not

Ph Ala ! why ha t thou disappo nted me of slaying my hat d n *my* with my bow!

Ne Nay it suits ot w t my ho our nor with thi *Exit* O YSSEUS

Ph Well thou mayest b ur of one th n —that the ch fs of the host th lying herald of th Greeks, tho gh bra n th wo ds, oward n fight

Ne Good the bow i thine and thou hast *no* cause of a o complaint gai st me

Ph I gra t it and thou hast hown the race my so fr m which thou spr ngest—no child thou of Si yph us, but f Achilles, whose fame was fairest when he was w th th livin as it is now among the dead

Ne Sw t t *me is* thy praise of my sire and of myself but hear th boo that I am fa n t win from th M n must needs bear the fortunes gi n by the gods b t when they cling to self inflicted mis-

will go on their way through the shrill breeze for I can arrest their flight no more

Ch Tis thou tis thou thyself ill fated man that hast so decreed this fortune to which thou art captive comes not from without or from a stronger hand for when it was in thy power to show wisdom thy choice was to reject the better fate and to accept the worse

Ph Ah hapless hapless then that I am and broken by suffering who henceforth must dwell here in my misery with no man for companion in the days to come and waste away—woe woe is me—no longer bringing food to my home no longer gaining it with the winged weapons held in my strong hands

But the unsuspected deceits of a treacherous soul beguiled me Would that I might see him the contriver of this plot doomed to my pangs and for as long a time!

Ch Fate heaven appointed fate hath come upon thee in this—not any treachery to which my hand was lent Point not at me thy dread and baneful curse! Fain indeed am I that thou shouldest not reject my friendship

Ph Ah me ah me! And sitting I ween on the marge of the white waves he mocks me brandishing the weapon that sustained my hapless life the weapon which no other living man had borne! Ah thou well loved bow ah thou that hast been torn from loving hands surely if thou canst feel thou seest with pity that the comrade of Heracles is now to use thee nevermore! Thou hast found a new and wily master by him art thou wielded foul deceits thou seest and the face of that abhorred foe by whom countless mischiefs springing from vile arts have been contrived against me—be thou O Zeus my witness!

Ch It is the part of a man ever to assert the right but when he hath done so to refrain from stinging with rancorous taunts Odysseus was but the envoy of the host and at their mandate achieved a public benefit for his friends

Ph Ah my winged prey and ye tribes of bright eyed beasts that this place holds in its upland pastures start no more in flight from your lairs for I bear not in my hands those shafts which were my strength of old—ah wretched that I now am! Nay roam at large—the place hath now no more terrors for you no more! Now is the moment to take blood for blood to glut yourselves at will on my discoloured flesh! Soon shall I pass out of life for whence shall I find the means to live? Who can feed thus on the winds when he no longer commands aught that life giving earth supplies?

Ch For the love of the gods if thou hast any regard for a friend who draws near to thee in all kindness approach him! Nay consider consider well—it is in thine own power to escape from this plague Cruel is it to him on whom it feeds and time cannot teach patience under the countless woes that dwell with it

Ph Again again thou hast recalled the old pain to my thoughts—kindest though thou art of all who have visited this shore! Why hast thou afflicted me? What hast thou done unto me!

Ch How meanest thou?

Ph If it was thy hope to take me to that Trojan land which I abhor

Ch Nay so I deem it best

Ph Leave me then—begone!

Ch Welcome is thy word right welcome I am not loth to obey Come let us be going each to his place in the ship! *They begin to move away*

Ph By the Zeus who hears men s curses depart not I implore you!

Ch Be calm

Ph Friends in the gods name stay!

Ch Why dost thou call?

Ph Alas alas! My doom my doom! Hapless, I am undone! O foot foot what shall I do with thee wretched that I am in the days to come? O friends, return!

Ch What would st thou have us do different from the purport of thy former bidding?

Ph Tis no just cause for anger if one who is distraught with stormy pain speaks frantic words

Ch Come then unhappy man as we exhort thee.

Ph Never never—of that be assured—no thou h the lord of the fiery lightning threaten to wrap me in the blaze of his thunderbolts! Perish Ilium and the men before its walls who had the heart to spurn me from them thus crippled! But oh my friends, grant me one boon!

Ch What would st thou ask?

Ph A sword if ye can find one or an axe or any weapon—oh bring it to me!

Ch What rash deed would st thou do?

Ph Mangle this body utterly hew limb from limb with mine own hand! Death death is my thou ht now—

Ch What means this?

Ph I would seek my sire—

Ch In what land?

Ph In the realm of the dead he is in the sunlight no more Ah my home city of my fathers! Would I might behold thee—misguided indeed that I was who left thy sacred stream and went forth to help the Danai mine enemies! Undone—undone!

Ch Long since should I have left thee and should now have been near my ship had I not seen Odysseus approaching and the son of Achilles too coming hither to us

Enter NEOPTOLEMUS *followed by* ODYSSEUS

Od Wilt thou not tell me on what errand thou art returning in such hot haste?

Ne To undo the fault that I committed before

Od A strange saying and what was the fault?

Ne When obeying thee and all the host—

Od What deed didst thou that became thee not?

Ne When I ensnared a man with base fraud and guile

Od Whom? Alas!—canst thou be planning some rash act?

Ne Rash—no but to the son of Poeas—

Od What wilt thou do? A strange fear comes over me.

N —from whom I took thi bow to him again—

Od Zeus! what wouldst thou say? Thou wilt not g e t back?

Ne Yea I ha gotten it basely and without right.

Od I the name f the gods, savest thou this to mock me?

N If it be mock ry to speak the truth.

Od What mea est thou son of Achilles? What ha t thou said?

Ne Mu t I epeat the same words twice and thrice?

Od I should ha e wished n t to hear them at all.

Ne Pest ssured that I ha e nothin m re to say

Od Th re s a power I tell thee that hall pre ent thy deed

N What meanest tho ? Who is to hinder me in this?

Od Th whole host of the A haeans,—and I for one

Ne Wise thou h thou be thy w rd are oid of isdom

Od Thy speech is n t w se nor yet thy purpose.

N B t f just that is better tha w se

Od And ho is t just, to gi p what thou hast won by my counsels

N M fault hath been shameful and I m st seek t tne it

Od Ha t thou o fear f the Achaean host in doing th

Ne W th just on my side I do not fear thy t r ors.

Od B t I will ompel thee

N Nay n t ev n to thy f rce do I yield obedi ence

Od Then we hall fi ht t with the Trojans, but w th thee

N Com th n what must

Od Seest thou m right hand o my word hilt?

N N thou shalt see me d g the sam and that p omptly

Od W l, I ill take mo e heed of thee but I ul go nd t ll thi to ll the host, nd by th m tho shalt be puni hed

N Thou ha t ome t th senses and if thou rt thus prud t hen forth percha c thou ma est keep lear of t oubl *Exit* ODY SEUS.

B t thou O son f Poea Phil ctetes, come forth lea th sh lter f th rock home!

P (*thin*) What mea this noise of oices o ce mor ri g bes e m ca e?

Wh d ou call me forth? What would ye ha f me rs? (*H a pear at the m uth of the cave d see t PHILOCT*) Ah m ! thi bodes good Can y ha com as herald of ew woes f me to crown th ill?

N Fear not b t hea ken to th wo d that I bri

Ph I m fraid F ir word b ou ht me e il for t ne n befor hen I belie ed thy promises.

N I there no room, then, for pentance?

Ph E en su h wast thou in speech, when seeking to steal my bow—a trusty friend with treason in his heart

N But not so now and I fain would learn whether thy resolve is to abide here and endure, or to sail with us.

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Ne No I swear it by the pure majesty of Zeus most hi h!

Ph O welcome wo d —if thy wor ls be true!

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As he ha ds the bow and arro s to PHILOCTETES *O YS USS ddenly ppears*

Od But I fo bid it—be the gods my witnesses—in the nam of the Atreid e a d all the host!

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Od Be su e f t—and thou seest him at thy s de who w ll carry thee to the plains of Troy perf rce whether the son of Achilles w ll or no

Ph But t thy cost if th s a row fly straight (*Bends h s bow*)

N (*seiz g his arm*) Ah for the gods lo e for be r—launch not thy shaft!

Ph Unhand m in Hea en s name dear youth!

Ne I w ll n t

Ph Ala ! why ha t th u d suppo ted me of slay ing my h ted e my w th my bow!

N N y t suits not w th my ho ur nor with thi e. *Exit* O YSSEUS

Ph Well, tho mayest be sure of one th n —that th ch ef of the host th lying h rald of the Greeks, tho h b a e w th wo ds, e cowards in fight

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Ne Rash—no but to the son of Poeas—

Od. What wilt thou do? A strange fear comes over me—

Ne. —from whom I took this bow, to him again—

Od. Zeus! what would st thou sa ? Thou wilt not g t back?

Ne. Yea, I ha e gotten t basely and without ri ht

Od. In the name of the gods, sa est thou this to mock me?

Ne. If it be mockery to speak the truth.

Od. What meanest thou, son of Achilles? What hast thou said

Ne. Must I repeat the same words twice and thrice?

Od. I should ha e wished not t hear them at all.

Ne. Rest assured that I ha e nothin more t say

Od. There s a power, I tell thee, that shall pre ent thy deed

Ne. What meanest thou? Who is to hinder me in thi

Od. Th whol host of the Achaeans—and I for one.

Ne. W se though thou be, thy words are oid of wisdom.

Od. Thy speech is not wise, nor yet thy purpose.

Ne. B t f j t, that is better than w se

Od. And how is t just, to *gi e up* what thou hast won b m counsels?

Ne. M f ult hath been sham ful, and I mu t seek t retrieve t

Od. Hast thou no fear of the A haea host in doing this

Ne. W h justice on my side, I d not fear thy terrors.

Od. But I will compel thee.

Ne. N y t e en t th f rc do I yield bed ence

Od. Th n we shall fi ht ot with the Tro ns, but with thee

Ne. Come, th what must

Od. Seest thou m f t ha d on m sword hilt?

Ne. N thou shalt see me doing th same and hat promptly

Od. Well, I will tak no mor heed of thee b t I ll go nd tell thi t all th host nd by them thou shalt be puni hed.

Ne. Thou hast om t th senses and I thou art thus prud henceforth, per han e thou ma est keep clear f troubl *Exit* ODY S EUS

B tho O son f Poeas, Philoctetes, come forth ea th sh lter o th rocky home!

Ph. (*hin*) What mea s this ose f oices onc mor ris besid m ca ?

Wh d ou call m forth? What w uld ye ha f m sirs? (*H app t the m uth f th cave nd see* YOLEMUS) Ah m ! thi bodes n good Can y ha om a h rald f n w woes for me t rown the ld?

Ne. Fea r b t hea ken t the w ds that I bring

Ph. I am fraid Fair wo d brought me il for tune oc before hen I beli ed thy promises

Ne. I th e no oom then, for pentan e?

Ph. E en su h wast thou in speech, when seeking to steal my bow—a trusty friend with treason in his heart

Ne. But not so now and I fain would learn whether thy resol e is to abide here and endure, or to sail w th us.

Ph. St p speak no more! All that thou canst say will be sa d in ain

Ne. Thou art resol ed?

Ph. Mor firmly believe me than speech can tell.

Ne. W ll I could ha e w d ed that thou hadst li tened to my words but f I peak not in season I ha e done.

Ph. A e thou wilt say all in va n

Nev r ca st thou win the am ty of my soul, thou who ha t taken the stay of my l fe by fraud and robbed m f it—and then ha t come here to gi e me counsel—thou most hatef l off pring of a nobl sire! P r d t on seize you all the Atreidae f rst and n xt the so of Laertes, and thee!

Ne. Utter no mo e curses but recei e these weapon from my hand.

Ph. What sayest thou? Am I being tricked a sec ond time?

Ne. No I swear it by the pure majesty of Zeus most h gh!

Ph. O wel ome words— f thy words be true!

Ne. The deed sha l soon pro e the word come, stretch forth thy right hand nd be master of thy bow!

As he hands th b and arro s t PHILOCTETES *on* *re* *su denly* *pears*

Od. But I fo bid t—be the gods my witnesses—in th name f the Atr idae and ll the host!

Ph. My son whose o ce was that? Did I hear Od sseus

Od. Be su f it—and thou seest him at thy side who w ll carry thee t the pla s of Troy *perforce* whethe th so of A h les w ll or n.

Ph. But to thy cost if th s r ow fl stra ght.

(*Bends h s b*)

Ne. (*seizes* *g h s arm*) Ah f r the gods l e for bear—la nch n t th sh ft!

Ph. U hand me t Hea en s name dear youth!

Ne. I wil ot.

Ph. Ala ! hy ha t thou d sappoi ted me of slay ing my hated en my w th my bo ?

Ne. N y it su ts not w th my ho or r or with th *Ex t* ODYSSEUS

Ph. Well, thou mayest be su e of o th —that th ch f f th host the ly g heralds of th Greeks, th h bra w th wo d re coward in fi ht

Ne. Good th bow th ne a d thou ha t no cau e of nge o complai t a a n t m

Ph. I grant it a d thou hast hown the ra e my so f m which th u sp ngest—no ch ld thou of S yph s, b t f Ach lles, whose fame was fai est wh he was th the l n as it now amo g the d ad

Ne. Swe t t me t thy pra se of my sir and of myself b t hear the boon that I am fain to win from thee Men must need bear the f tunes gi n by th god but when they cling to self infl cted mis-

will go on their way through the shrill breeze for I can arrest their flight no more

Ch Tis thou tis thou thyself ill fated man that hast so decreed this fortune to which thou art captive comes not from without or from a stronger hand for when it was in thy power to show wisdom thy choice was to reject the better fate and to accept the worse

Ph Ah hapless hapless then that I am and broken by suffering who henceforth must dwell here in my misery with no man for companion in the days to come and waste away—woe woe is me—no longer bringing food to my home no longer gaining it with the winged weapons held in my strong hands

But the unsuspected deceits of a treacherous soul beguiled me Would that I might see him the contriver of this plot doomed to my pang and for as long a time!

Ch Fate heaven appointed fate hath come upon thee in this —not any treachery to which my hand was lent Point not at me thy dread and baneful curse! I am indeed am I that thou shouldest not reject my friendship

Ph Ah me ah me! And sitting I ween on the marge of the white waves he mocks me brandishing the weapon that sustained my hapless life the weapon which no other living man had borne! Ah thou well loved bow ah thou that hast been torn from loving hands surely if thou canst feel thou seest with pity that the comrade of Heracles is now to use thee nevermore! Thou hast found a new and wily master by him art thou wielded foul deceits thou seest and the face of that abhorred foe by whom countless mischiefs springing from vile arts have been contrived against me—be thou O Zeus my witness!

Ch It is the part of a man ever to assert the right but when he hath done so to refrain from stinging with rancorous taunts Odysseus was but the envoy of the host and at their mandate achieved a public benefit for his friends

Ph Ah my winged prey and ye tribes of bright eyed beasts that this place holds in its upland pastures start no more in flight from your lairs for I bear not in my hands those shafts which were my strength of old—ah wretched that I now am! Nay roam at large—the place hath now no more terrors for you no more! Now is the moment to take blood for blood to glut yourselves at will on my discoloured flesh! Soon shall I pass out of life for whence shall I find the means to live? Who can feed thus on the winds when he no longer commands aught that life giving earth supplies?

Ch For the love of the gods if thou hast any regard for a friend who draws near to thee in all kindness approach him! Nay consider consider well—it is in thine own power to escape from this plague Cruel is it to him on whom it feeds and time cannot teach patience under the countless woes that dwell with it

Ph Again again thou hast recalled the old pain to my thoughts—kindest though thou art of all who have visited this shore! Why hast thou afflicted me? What hast thou done unto me!

Ch How meanest thou?

Ph If it was thy hope to take me to that Trojan land which I abhor

Ch Nay o I deem it best

Ph Leave me then—begone!

Ch Welcome is thy word right welcome I am not loth to obey Come let us be going each to his place in the ship! *They beg i to move away*

Ph By the Zeus who hears men s curses, depart not I implore you!

Ch Be calm

Ph Friends in the gods name stay!

Ch Why dost thou call?

Ph Alas alas! My doom my doom! Hapless I am undone! O foot foot what shall I do with thee wretched that I am in the days to come? O friends, return!

Ch What would st thou have us do different from the purport of thy former bidding?

Ph Tis no just cause for anger if one who is distraught with stormy pain speaks frantic words

Ch Come then unhappy man as we exhort thee

Ph Never never—of that be assured—no though the lord of the fiery lightning threaten to wrap me in the blaze of his thunderbolts! Perish Ilium and the men before its walls who had the heart to spurn me from them thus crippled! But oh my friends grant me one boon!

Ch What would st thou ask?

Ph A sword if ye can find one or an axe or any weapon—oh bring it to me!

Ch What rash deed would st thou do?

Ph Mangle this body utterly hew limb from limb with mine own hand! Death death is my thought now—

Ch What means this?

Ph I would seek my sire—

Ch In what land?

Ph In the realm of the dead he is in the sunlight no more Ah my home city of my fathers! Would I might behold thee—misguided indeed that I was who left thy sacred stream and went forth to help the Danai mine enemies! Undone—undone!

Ch Long since should I have left thee and should now have been near my ship had I not seen Odysseus approaching and the son of Achilles too coming hither to us

Enter NEOPTOLEMUS *followed by* ODYSSEUS

Od Wilt thou not tell me on what errand thou art returning in such hot haste?

Ne To undo the fault that I committed before

Od A strange saying and what was the fault?

Ne When obeying thee and all the host—

Od What deed didst thou that became thee not?

Ne When I ensnared a man with base fraud and guile

Od Whom? Alas!—canst thou be planning some rash act?

Ne Rash—no but to the son of Poeas—

eries as thou dost no one can justly excuse or pity them Thou hast become intractable thou canst tolerate no counsellor and if one advise thee speak in with good will thou hatest him deeming him a foe who wishes thee ill Yet I will speak calling Zeus to witness who hears men s oaths and do thou mark these words and write them in thy heart

Thou sufferest this sore plague by a heaven sent doom because thou didst draw near to Chrys s watcher the serpent secret warder of her home that guards her roofless sanctuary And know that relief from this grievous sickness can never be thy portion so long as the sun still rises in the east and sets in the west until thou come of thine own free will to the plains of Troy where thou shalt meet with the sons of Asclepius our comrades and shalt be eased of this malady and with this bow s aid and mine shalt achieve the capture of the Ilian towers

I will tell thee how I know that these things are so ordained We have a Trojan prisoner Helenus foremost among seers who saith plainly that all this must come to pass and further that this present summer must see the utter overthrow of Troy or else he is willing that his life be forfeit if this his word prove false

Now therefore that thou knowest this yield with a good grace tis a glorious heightening of thy gain to be singled out as bravest of the Greeks—first to come into healing hands then to take the Troy of many tears and so to win a matchless renown

Ph O hateful life why why dost thou keep me in the light of day instead of suffering me to seek the world of the dead? Ah me what shall I do How can I be deaf to this man s words who hath counselled me with kindly purpose? But shall I yield then? How after doing that shall I come into men s sight wretched that I am? Who will speak to me? Ye eyes that have beheld all my wrongs how could ye endure to see me consorting with the sons of Atreus who wrought my ruin or with the accursed son of Lærtes?

It is not the resentment for the past that stings me—I seem to foresee what I am doomed to suffer from these men in the future for when the mind hath once become a parent of evil it teaches men to be evil thenceforth And in thee too this conduct moves my wonder It behoved thee never to revisit Troy thyself and to hinder me from going thither seeing that those men have done thee outrage by wresting from thee the honours of thy sire they who in their award of thy father s arms adjudged the hapless Ajax inferior to Odysseus after that wilt thou go to fight at their side —and wouldest thou constrain me to do likewise?

Nay do not so my son but rather as thou hast sworn to me convey me home and abiding in Scyros thyself leave those evil men to their evil doom So shalt thou win double thanks from me as from my sire and shalt not seem through helping bad men to be like them in thy nature

Ne There is reason in what thou sayest nevertheless I would have thee put thy trust in the gods and in my words and sail forth from this land with me thy friend

Ph What! to the plains of Troy and to the abhorred son of Atreus—with this wretched foot?

Ne Nay but to those who will free thee and thine ulcered limb from pain and will heal thy sickness

Ph Thou giver of dire counsel what canst thou mean?

Ne What I see is fraught with the best issue for us both

Ph Hast thou no shame that the gods should hear those words?

Ne Why should a man be ashamed of benefiting his friends?

Ph Is this benefit to the Atreidae or for me?

Ne For thee I ween I am thy friend and speak in friendship

Ph How so when thou would st give me up to my foes?

Ne Prithee learn to be less defiant in misfortune

Ph Thou wilt ruin me I know thou wilt with these words

Ne I will not but I say that thou dost not understand

Ph Do I not know that the Atreidae cast me out?

Ne They cast thee out but look if they will not restore thee to welfare

Ph Never—if I must first consent to visit Troy

Ne What am I to do then if my pleadin cannot win thee to aught that I urge? The easiest co rse for me is that I should cease from speech and that thou shouldest live even as now without deliverance

Ph Let me bear the sufferings that are my portion but the promise which thou madest to me with hand laid in mine—to bring me home—that promise do thou fulfil my son and tarry not nor speak any more of Troy for the measure of my lamentation is full

Ne If thou wilt let us be going

Ph O generous word!

Ne Now plant thy steps firmly

Ph To the utmost of my strength

Ne But how shall I escape blame from the Achaeans?

Ph Heed it not

Ne What if they ravage my country?

Ph I will be there—

Ne And what help wilt thou render?

Ph With the shafts of Heracles—

Ne What is thy meaning?

Ph I will keep them afar

Ne Take thy farewell of this land and set forth

HERACLES *appears above them*

Heracles Nay not yet till thou hast hearkened unto my words son of Poeas know that the voice of Heracles soundeth in thine ears and thou lookest upon his face

For thy sake have I come from the heavenly seats to show thee the purposes of Zeus and to stay the journey whereon thou art departing give thou heed unto my counsel

THE PLAYS OF

EURIPIDES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

EURIPIDES c. 480–406 B.C.

EURIPIDES, "the philosopher of the stage" as he was already called by the ancients, was born of Athenian parents on the island of Salamis. The year of his birth seems to have been a matter of conjecture. One tradition groups the three tragedians round the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. Aeschylus fought in the ranks, Sophocles danced in the Boys' Chorus, Euripides was born. Another source associates his birth with Aeschylus' first victory in 484.

Euripides' father, Mnesarchus, was a merchant; his mother, Cleito, is known to have been of very high family. Yet for some reason it was a recognized joke to say she was a greengrocer and sold poor greens. Despite the gibes of the comedians, he was probably neither poor nor of humble origin. As a boy he poured wine for the dancers and carried torches in religious festivals, which he could not have done had he not enjoyed a certain social position. Since he was called upon for costly public duties, such as equipping, in whole or in part, a warship and acting as consul for Magnesia, he must have had independent means. He also possessed a large library, which was rare then in Greece for a private citizen.

In accordance with a prophecy that the boy would win victories, the poet's father is said to have had him trained as a professional athlete. He may have thought at one time [illegible] a career, for paintings attributed to him were shown at Megara in later times. He is also known to have been friendly with the philosophers. He is said to have been a pupil of Anaxagoras and a close friend of Protagoras, and we are told that Socrates never went to the theater unless there was a play by Euripides, when he would walk as far as the Peiraeus to see it.

Euripides early discovered his dramatic gift. He began writing at the age of eighteen, and in 455 B.C. he was granted a chorus, that is, he was permitted to compete for the tragic prize. In the fifty years of his dramatic career he wrote between eighty and ninety plays, but he did not win a victory until 441, thirteen years after his first appearance before the public. His fifth and last victory was for plays exhibited after his death, in 405, by his son, the younger Euripides. He was incessantly assailed by comedians, especially by Aristophanes, and was frequently defeated by lesser poets, but long before his death he had acquired a great reputation throughout the Greek world. Plutarch in his *Life of Nicias* says that Athenian prisoners in Syracuse escaped death and even received their freedom if they could recite passages from the works of Euripides, and that some of them upon returning home expressed their gratitude directly to the poet. Aristotle, in spite of specific strictures, calls Euripides "the most tragic of the poets," and Euripides is more often quoted by him and by Plato than are Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Of the nineteen plays that survive under the name of Euripides, one, the *Cyclops*, is a satyr play, and the *Rhesus* is frequently, though not always, considered spurious. The oldest of the extant plays is the *Alcestis*, which appeared in 438. The *Bacchantes* and the *Iphigenia at Aulis* were posthumously presented. The other plays that can be approximately dated are the *Medea* 431, the *Hippolytus* 428, the *Trojan Women* 415, the *Helen* 412, the *Orestes* 408.

Unlike Aeschylus and Sophocles, Euripides seems to have taken little part in politics and war, although there is an allusion to him in Aristotle which seems to imply that he had on one occasion a diplomatic post. The ancients thought of Euripides as a gloomy recluse who never laughed. According to these stories, he wore a long beard, lived much alone and hated society; he had crowds of books and did not like women. He lived at Salamis, in a cave with two openings and a beautiful sea view, and there he could be seen all day long, thinking to himself and writing, for he despised anything that was not great and high.

Toward the end of his life Euripides received honors and distinctions in Macedonia, where, like other men of letters, he went at the invitation of King Archelaus. He spent his last years at the Macedonian court, high in the favor and confidence of the king, and when he died the king cut off his hair as an expression of his grief.

Euripides died in 406 B.C., a few months before Sophocles, who wore mourning for him in the tragic competition of that year. The Athenians sent an embassy to Macedonia to bring back his body, but King Archelaus refused to give it up. A cenotaph to the memory of Euripides was then erected on the road between Athens and the Peiraeus. The poet's lyre, stylus, and tablets were bought for a talent of gold by Dionysius of Syracuse, who enshrined them in the temple of the Muses.

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r-50

RHESUS

DRA M ATIS PERSON AE

Chorus o Trojan Senti els	Odys eus
Hector	D omedes
Æ E s	Paris
Dolon	Ath en
Messe ger *a shepherd*	The M se
Rhesus	The Ch riote r of Rhesus

Before Hector tent at the g es of Troy E er ch s.

Chor s. To Hector s couch away one of ou wake ful squires that tend the pr ce to see f he ha e any fresh t d s from th wa n rs wh were set to guard the ssembled host duri the fou th watch of the ht (*Ca s to n ctor en th tent*) Lift p thy head! Prop thine rm beneath t! Unseal that louri eye from t pose thy l wl couch of scattered lea es O Hector quit! Tis time t heatken *Enter* HECTOR

Hector Who goes there? Is it friend who calls? Wh art thou? Thy watchword? Speak! Who in the da k hours comes nigh my couch must tell me who h is.

Ch Sentin ls we f th army

He Why this tumultuous haste?

Ch Be of good courage

H I th re some mid ht ambuscade?

Ch Na

H The why dost thou desert thy post and rouse th arm sa thou ha som ti ling of the n ht? Art ware h w ea the Arg host we tak our ni ht s epose in all our harness clad?

Ch T rms! O Hector seek thi e allies sleepi g camp! Bid them w eld the spea ! Awak them! To thi own compa y despat h friend Saddle nd bridl th teeds. Who will to the son of Panth s? wh t Europa s son *captain f the Lycian band*? Wh are they who sh uld inspect the ctims? Wh be th lead rs of th li ht armed troops? Ye Phrygian archers, strin you horn tipped bows.

H fear confidence th t di gs in pa oth g plainly set f th Ca t be that thou rt smitten th w ld fright by Pa the so of Cronion, nd lea g thy wat h therefor dost rouse the host What means thy ous s mmons? What t d ings can I say thou bringest? Thy words are many but no plain tat me t hast thou made.

Ch Th l ni ht through O Hect r the A ei e host h th ki dled fi es, d b ht with t rch shines th h red fleet T Agamemnon s te t th bol army mo es clamorously b ght ea er for t esh ord rs ma be for bef t ha e I see such tumu mong yon sea f rin folk. Where tor I wa usp f what mi ht happen nd came to t ll thee that thou mayest ha e o caus to blam m h reafter

He In good season com st thou, albe t thy t l ings a fra ght w th terror for those cowards are bent on gi ng me the sl p and ste l ng away fr m this land in th r ships by n ght their m ln ht sig nalling con s ces me of this. Ah! F rt ne to rob me n m hour of triumph a lion of his prey er e er this spear of mine with one f ll swoop had made an end f r a e of yond r Argi e host! Yea had not th sun s bri ht lamp withh ld his l ght I had not stayed my ictor s spear ere I had fi ed their sh ps and made my way from tent to te t drenching this hand n Achæa gore R ght eager was I to make a n ht attack and t ke ad a t ge of th st ke of lu k by hea en sent but those wise seers of mine who ha e hea en s w ll so put persuaded me to wait the dawn and then lea e not one Achæan in the land. But those others awa t not the counsel of my soothsayers d rk ss turns runaways to heroes. Needs must we now w thout d la pass th word along the line Arm arm! from slumber cease! for many a man of them en as he leaps aboard his ship shall be smitten throu h th back and spri kle th ladd rs w th blood and others shall be fast bound with cord and le rn to t ll our Phrygian gl be

Ch Thou hastest Hector before thou k owest clea ly what happenin for we do ot know for certain whether our foes are fl ng

H What reason else had the Argi e host to kin dle fires?

Ch I ca not say my soul doth mu h mi ve me

H If thi thou fearest be sure there s nought thou would t t fear

Ch Never aforetim did the enemy kindle such a blaze.

H No nor e er before did they uffer such shame ful de at and rout

Ch This th u didst achieve look now to wh t rema n to do.

He I h e but one word t say Arm arm against the foe!

Ch Lo! where Æneas comes, n hot ha te too, as thou h he hath news to tell his friends.

Enter ÆNE S

Æ Why Hector ha the sentinels in terror

not break my word to thee will I give Achilles' team, to add splendour to thy house.

Do. I thank thee; in receiving them I avow I am taking a fairer gift than any other Phrygian for my bravery. Yet thee it needs not to be envious; countless joys besides this will glad thy heart as thy king shows o'er this land. *Exit* HECTOR.

Ch. Great the enterprise, and great the boon thou deservest to receive. Happy, aye happy wilt thou be if thou succeed; fair the fame thy toil shall win. Yet to wed with prince's sister were a distinction high. On Heaven's decrees let Justice keep her eye! what man can give thou hast, it seems, in full.

Do. Now will I set forth, and going within my house will don such garb as suits, and then will hasten to the Argive fleet.

Ch. Why, what dress in place of this wilt thou assume?

Do. Such as suits my task and furtive steps.

Ch. One should ever learn wisdom from the wise; tell me wherewith thou wilt drape thy body.

Do. I will fasten a wolf-skin about my back, and over my head put the brute's gaping jaws; then fit its fore-feet to my hands and its hind legs to my legs; I will go on all fours in imitation of its gait to puzzle the enemy when I approach their trenches and barriers round the ships. But whenever I come to a deserted spot, on two feet will I walk; such is the ruse I have decided on.

Ch. May Hermes, Maia's child, escort thee safely there and back, prince of tricksters as he is! Thou knowest what thou hast to do; good luck is all thou needest now.

Do. I shall return in safety, and bring to thee the head of Odysseus when I have slain him, or maybe the son of Tydeus, and with this clear proof before thee thou shalt know that Dolon went unto the Argive fleet; for ere the dawn appear I will win back home with bloodstained hand.

Exit DOLON.

Ch. O Apollo, blest godhead, lord of Thymbra and of Delos, who haunt'st thy fane in Lycia, *come* with all thy archery, appear this night, and by thy guidance save our friend now setting forth, and aid the Dardans' scheme, almighty god whose hands in days of old upreared Troy's walls! Good luck attend his mission to the ships; may he reach the host of Hellas and spy it out, then turn again and reach the altars of his father's home in Ilium!

Grant him to mount the chariot drawn by Phthia's steeds, when Hector our master hath sacked Achaea's camp, those steeds that the sea-god gave to Peleus, son of Aeacus; for he and he alone had heart enough for home and country to go and spy the naval station. His spirit I admire; how few stout hearts there be when on the sea the sun bedims and the city labours in the surge! Phrygia yet hath left valiant few and bold hearts in the battle's press; 'tis only Mysians who scorn us as allies.

Which of the Achaeans will their four-footed murderous foe slay in their beds, as he crosses the ground, feigning to be a beast? May he lay Menelaus low or slay Agamemnon and bring his head to Helen's hands, causing her to lament her evil kinsman, who hath come against my city, against the land of Troy with his countless host of ships.

DOLON *reappears disguised and departs for the Greek camp.* *Enter* MESSENGER.

Messenger (*a Shepherd*). Great king, ever in days to come be it mine to bring my masters such news as I am bearing now unto thine ears.

Enter HECTOR.

He. Full oft the rustic mind is afflicted with dulness; so thou, as like as not, art come to this ill-suited place to tell thy master that his flocks are beating well. Knowest thou not my palace or my father's throne? Thither thou shouldst carry thy tale when thou hast prospered with thy flocks.

Me. Dull we herdsmen are, I do not gainsay thee. But none the less I bring thee joyful news.

He. A truce to thy tale of how the sheep-fold fares; I have battles to fight and spears to wield.

Me. The very things of which I too came to tell thee; for a chieftain of countless host is on his way to join thee, as thy friend and to champion this land.

He. His country? and the home that he hath left?

Me. His country, Thrace; men call his father Strymon.

He. Didst say that Rhesus was setting foot in Troy?

Me. Thou hast it; and savest me half my speech.

He. How is it that he comes to Ida's meadows, wandering from the broad waggon-track across the plain?

Me. I cannot say for certain, though I might guess. To make his entry by night is no idle scheme, when he hears that the plains are packed with foemen's troops. But he frightened us rustic hinds who dwell along the slopes of Ida,[1] the earliest settlement in the land, as he came by night through yon wood where wild beasts couch. On surged the tide of Thracian warriors with loud shouts; whereat in wild amaze we drove our flocks unto the heights, for fear that some Argives were coming to plunder and harry the steading; till that we caught the sound of other voices than Greek and ceased from our alarm. Then went I and questioned in the Thracian tongue those who were reconnoitring the road, who it was that led them, and whose he avowed him to be that came to the city to help the sons of Priam. And when I had heard all I wished to learn, I stood still a while; and lo! I see Rhesus mounted like a god upon his Thracian chariot. Of gold was the yoke that linked the necks of his steeds whiter than the snow; and on his shoulders flashed his targe with figures welded in gold; while a gorgon of bronze like that which gleams from the aegis of the goddess was bound upon the frontlet of his horses, ringing out its note of fear with many a bell. The number of his host thou couldst *not reckon to a sum exact*, for it was beyond our comprehension; many a knight was there, and serried ranks of targeteers, and archers

[1] Cf. Homer *Iliad*, xx. 216.

made their way through the host to thy couch to hold a midnight conclave and disturb the army?

He Case thee in thy coat of mail Æneas

Æn How now? are tidings come of some secret stratagem set on foot during the night by the foe?

He They are flying these foes of ours and going aboard their ships

Æn What sure proof canst thou give of this?

He The livelong night they are kindling blazing torches methinks they will not wait for the morrow but after lighting brands upon their ships decks will leave this land and fly to their homes

Æn And thou wherefore dost thou gird thee with thy sword?

He With my spear will I stop them even as they fly and leap aboard their ships and my hand shall be heavy upon them for shameful it were in us aye and cowardly as well as shameful when God gives them into our hands to let our foes escape without a blow after all the injuries they have done us

Æn Would thou wert as sage as thou art bold! But lo! among mortals the same man is not dowered by nature with universal knowledge each hath his special gift appointed him thine is arms another s is sage counsel Thou hearest their torches are blazing and art fired with the hope that the Achæans are flying and wouldst lead on our troops across the trenches in the calm still night Now after crossing the deep yawning trench supposing thou shouldst find the enemy are not flying from the land but are awaiting thy onset beware lest thou suffer defeat and so never reach this city again for how wilt thou pass the palisades in a rout? And how shall thy charioteers cross the bridges without dashing the axles of their cars to pieces? And if victorious thou hast next the son of Peleus to engage he will ne er suffer thee to cast the firebrand on the fleet no nor to harry the Achæans as thou dost fondly fancy Nay for yon man is fierce as fire a very tower of valiancy Let us rather then leave our men to sleep calmly under arms after the weariness of battle while we send as I advise whoe er will volunteer to spy upon the enemy and if they really are preparing to fly let us arise and fall upon the Argive host but if this signalling is a trap to catch us we shall discover from the spy the enemy s designs and take our measures such is my advice O King

Ch It likes me well so change thy mind and adopt this counsel I love not hazardous commands in generals What better scheme could be than for a fleet spy to approach the ships and learn why our foes are lighting fires in front of their naval station?

He Since this finds favour with you all prevail (*To* ÆNEAS) Go thou and marshal our allies may hap the host hearing of our midnight council is disturbed Mine shall it be to send one forth to spy upon the foe And if I discover any plot amongst them thou shalt fully hear thereof and at the council board shalt learn our will but in case they be starting off in flight with eager ear await the trumpet s call for then I will not stay but will this very night engage the Argive host there where their ships are hauled up

Æn Send out the spy forthwith there s safety in thy counsels now And thou shalt find me steadfast at thy side whene er occasion call *Exit* ÆNEAS

He What Trojan now of all our company doth volunteer to go and spy the Argive fleet? Who will be that patriot? Who saith I will ? Myself cannot at every point serve my country and my friends in arms

Dolon (*Comes from the rear*) I for my country will gladly run this risk and go to spy the Argive fleet and when I have learnt fully all that the Achæans plot I will return Hear the conditions on which I undertake this toil

He True to his name in sooth his country s friend is Dolon Thy father s house was famed of yore but thou hast made it doubly so

Do So must I toil but for my pains a meet reward should I receive For set a price on any deed and then and there it gives to it a double grace

He Yea that is but fair I cannot gainsay it Name any prize for thyself save the sway I bear

Do I covet not thy toilsome sovereignty

He Well then marry a daughter of Priam and become my good brother

Do Nay I care not to wed amongst those beyond my station

He There s gold if this thou lt claim as thy guerdon

Do Gold have I in my home no sustenance lack I

He What then is thy desire of all that Ilium stores within her?

Do Promise me my gift when thou dost conquer the Achæans

He I will give it thee do thou ask anything except the captains of the fleet

Do Slay them I do not ask thee to keep thy hand off Menelaus

He Is it the son of Oileus thou wouldst ask me for?

Do Ill hands to dig and delve are those mid luxury nursed

He Whom then of the Achæans wilt thou have alive to hold to ransom?

Do I told thee before my house is stored with gold

He Why then thou shalt come and with thine own hands choose out some spoil

Do Nail up the spoils for the god on their temple walls

He Prithee what higher prize than these wilt ask me for?

Do Achilles coursers Needs must the prize be worth the toil when one stakes one s life on Fortune s die

He Ah! but thy wishes clash with mine anent those steeds for of immortal stock they and their sires before them are those horses that bear the son of Peleus on his headlong course Them did King Poseidon ocean s god break and give to Peleus so runs the legend—yet for I did urge thee on I will

and appo ted the yearly tribut they should pay m house I crossed th firth a d lol am here on foot I tra ersed all thy borde s that r mained to pass, not as thou in thy jeers at those carousals of m cou trymen h atest n r sleepin soft in g lded paf rs, but amid th froze hu rica es that ex th Thracian main and the Pæonian sh res, learnin as I lay awake what suff rin s this soldi r s look my only wrap Tru my comin hath tarried but y t am I in tim ten l n years already hast thou been at th fra and ra ht a complished yet day n day out thou riskest all in this game of war w th Argives. While I will be content once to see th sun god rise, and sack yot towers and fall upon their anchored fleet and slay the Achæans and on the morrow home from Il m will I go, at one stroke endin ll thy toil. Let o e of you lay hand t pea to lift t f r l for all my lat arrival will with m la e m ke utter ha oc of th se aunti g Achæans

Ch. [y] sweet champion sent by Zeus! Only ma Zeus, throned on high, keep jealousy res tless fo fr m thee for thy presumptuous words! Yon fleet f ships from Argos sent ne er brought nor f merly nor now amon all ts warr rs a bra er tha thee how I wonde will Achilles, how will Aias tand the onset f th spear? Oh! to li e to see that happy day my princ that thou mayest wreak ven geance on them, gr pping thy la in thy death dealing hand!

Rh Such exploits am I ready to achie e *to aton* for m l n bsen e (with due submiss on to Nem esis I sa this) then whe we ha e cleared this city of ts foes nd thou ha t chosen out firstfruits for the gods, I fain would ma h w th thee gainst the Ar gi es ountry a d oming thither lay H lla aste with war that they in turn ma know the taste f ill.

H If thou couldst rid the city f this p esent curse and est r it t its ld security sure I should *feel* deep gratitud towards hea en But s fo sack m Argos nd th pa ture lands of H llas, as thou sa est tis no easy ta k.

Rh A ow they t that hither came the choicest ch fs of H llas?

H A nd I scorn them not enou h ha e I to d n dri in them way

Rh Well f we slay these *our task is fully done*

H Lea not th p esent need nor look to dis tant schemes.

Rh Tho art it seems, content to suffer tamely and mak no turn

H I rul an empir wid enough e en thou h I h bide B t on th l ft win o th right or in th entre f the allies thou may t plant thy shield nd marshal th t oops.

Rh Alone will I face the foe Hect B t f thou art ashamed fte all thy previous toil to ha no shar i fir ther hips prows, pla e m fa t fac t lea t ith A hilles nd his host

H C ainst him thou ca st not ran thy ea er pea

Rh Why t was surely said he sailed to Ilium

He He sailed and i com h ther but he is wroth and ta es no part w th the other chieftains in the fray

Rh Who next to him hath won a name in their host?

H Aias and the son of Tydeus are I take it no wh t his inferiors th re is Odysseus too, a noisy kna e to talk b t bold enough withal f ll men he hath wrought most outrage on th country For he came by ni ht to Athena s shrine and stole her image and took t to the A gi e sh ps next he made his way inside our battlements, clad as a a rant in a beg ar s garb and loudly did he curse the Arg es, sent as a spy to Ilium and then sneaked out aga n when he had slain the sentinels and wa ders at the g te He is e er t be found l rking n ambush about the altar of Th mbræan Apollo n h th city In him we ha e a troublous pest t wrestle w th

R No brave man deigns t sm te hi foe in secret b t t meet him face to face If I can catch this kna e ali e who, as thou sayest skulks i s ealthy ambuscade nd plots his m sch f I w ll impale him at th outlet of t e gates and set h m up for vultures of the a r to make their meal upon This is th death he ou ht to d e pirate and temple robber that he is.

He *To your quarters now for n ht draws o* For thee I will myself point out a spot where thy host ca watch th s n ght apart f om our arra *Our* watchword is Phœbus, if hapl there be need there of heas and mark it well and tell it to the Thracian rm Ye mu t ad ance in fro t of our r nks and *keep a z chful guard* and so receive Dolon who *went to* spy th hips, for he if safe he is, is en now pp oachin the camp of T oy

Exeunt HECTOR a d R ses

Ch Whose watch i t? who relieves me? n ghts earli stars are on the wane and th se en Pleiads mount th sky athwart the firmame t the eagle *floats. Rouse* ye why delay? Up from your beds to *the wa ch!* See ye not the moon s pale beam? Dawn is near day i coming nd lo! a star that heralds it.

Sem Chorus Who was told off to the first watch?
Th son of Mygdon, whom men call Corœbus.
Who fo s him?
The Pæonian contingent roused the Cilicians
And th Mysian us.
I t not then hi h tim we went and *roused* the Lycian for the fifth watch, *as the lot decided?*

Ch Ha k! hark! a sound its the n hting al that slew h r child si ing where sh *sits* upon her blood sta ed nest by Simo he p teous pla t sweet si e of the many trills already along Ida s slopes th are pa turin the flocks, and o er the n ght I cat h th shrill pipe s note sleep *on my closing* eye lids softly teals, th sweetest sleep that comes at dawn to tired eyes.

Sem Ch Why d th *not* our scout draw near whom Hect sent to spy the fleet?
H is so long away I ha e my *fears*.
Is it possibl he hath plunged int a hidden am bush and been slain?
Soon must we know

not a few with countless swarms of light armed troops in Thracian garb arrayed to bear them company Such the ally who comes to Troy s assistance *him the son of Peleus will ne er escape or if he fly or* meet him spear to spear

Ch Whenso the gods stand by the burghers staunch and true the tide of fortune glides with easy flow to a successful goal

He I shall find a host of friends now that fortune smiles upon my warring and Zeus is on my side But no need have we of those who shared not our toils of erst what time the War god driving all before him was rending the sails of our ship of state with his tempestuous blast Rhesus hath shewn the friendship he then bore to Troy for he cometh to the feast albeit he was not with the hunters when they took the prey nor joined his spear with theirs

Ch Thou art right to scorn and blame such friends yet welcome those who fain would help the state

He Sufficient we who long have kept Ilium safe

Ch Art so sure thou hast already caught the foe?

He Quite sure I am to morrow s light will make that plain

Ch Beware of what may chance full oft doth fortune veer

He I loathe the friend who brings his help too late

Me O prince to turn away allies earns hatred His mere appearing would cause a panic amongst the foe

Ch Let him at least since he *is* come approach thy genial board as guest if not ally for the gratitude of Priam s sons is forfeit in his case

He Thou counsellest aright thou too dost take the proper view Let Rhesus in his gilded mail join the allies of this land thanks to the messenger s report *Exeunt the* MESSENGER *and* HECTOR

Ch May Nemesis daughter of Zeus check the word that may offend for lo! I will utter all that my soul fain would say Thou art come O son of the *river god art come thrice welcome in thy advent* to the halls of Phrygia late in time thy Pierian mother and Strymon thy sire that stream with bridges fair are sending thee to us—Strymon who begat thee his strong young son that day his swirling waters found a refuge in the tuneful Muse s virgin bosom Thou art my Zeus my god of light as thou comest driving thy dappled steeds Now O Phrygia O my country now mayst thou by God s grace address thy saviour Zeus! *Shall old Troy* once more at last spend the live long day in drinking toasts and singing love s praise while the wildering wine cup sends a friendly challenge round as o er the sea *for Sparta bound the sons of Atreus quit the* Ilian strand? Ah! best of friends with thy strong arm and spear mayst thou this service do me then safe return Come appear brandish that shield of gold *full in Achilles f c* raise it aslant along the chariot s branching rail urging on thy steed the while and shaking thy lance with double point For none after facing th e will ever join the dance on the lawns of Argive Hera no but he shall die by Thracians slain and this land shall bear the burden of his corpse and be glad

Enter RHESUS

Hail all hail! O mighty prince! fair the scion thou hast bred O Thrace a ruler in his every look Mark his stalwart frame cased in golden corslet! Hark to the ringing bells that peal so proudly from his targ *handle hung A god O Troy a god a very Ares, a* scion of Strymon s stream and of the tuneful Muse breathes courage into thee

Re-enter HECTOR

Rhesus Brave son of sire as brave Hector prince of this land all hail! After many a long day I greet thee Right glad am I of thy success to see thee camped hard on the foemen s towers I come to help *thee raze their walls and fire their fleet of ships.*

He Son of that tuneful mother one of the Muses nine and of Thracian Strymon s stream I ever love to speak plain truth nature gave me not a double tongue Long long ago shouldst thou have come and shared the labours of this land nor suffered Troy for any help of thine to fall o er thrown by hostile Argive spears Thou canst not say twas any want of invitation that kept thee from coming with thy help to visit us How oft came heralds and embassies from Phrygia urgently requiring thine aid for our city? What sumptuous presents did we not send to thee? But thou brother barbarian though thou wert didst pledge away to Hellenes us thy barbarian brethren for all the help thou gavest Yet twas I with this strong arm that raised thee from thy paltry princedom to high lordship over Thrace that day I fell upon the Thracian chieftains face to face around Pangæus in Pæonia s land and broke their serried ranks and gave their people up to thee with the yoke upon their necks but thou hast trampled on *this great favour done thee and comest with laggard* step to give thine aid when friends are in distress. While they whom no natural tie of kin constrains, have long been here and some are dead and in their *graves beneath the heaped up cairn* no mean proof of loyalty to the city and others in harness clad and mounted on their cars with steadfast soul endure the icy blast and parching heat of the sun not pledging one another as thou art wont in long deep draughts on couches soft This is the charge I bring against thee and utter to thy face that thou mayst know how frank is Hector s tongue

Rh I too am such another as thyself straight to the point I cut my way no shuffling nature mine My heart was wrung with sorer anguish than ever thine was at my absence from this land I fumed and chafed but Scythian folk whose borders march with *mine made war on me on the very eve of my de*parture for Ilium already had I reached the strand of the Euxine sea there to transport my Thracian army Then did my spear pour out o er Scythia s soil great drops of bloody rain and Thrace too shared in the mingled slaughter This then was what did chance to keep me from coming to the land of Troy and joining thy standard But soon as I had conquered these and taken their children as hostages

O son of Laertes, I b d you sh athe your whetted swo ds, ye warriors all too ke n for dead before you Les th Thracian chief his steeds are captu ed b it the foe have a d there f a d are c ming forth again, you fly ith all speed to the ships sta ion Why d lay to save your li es when the foemen s s m s just bursti on you?

Ch On on! strik strike lay on lay on! d al death in e ery bl w!

Sem Ch Wh goes there?

Look you that man I mean. Ther are the th e es wh in the gloom disturbed this host H ther come h ther e ry man of you! I ha e them—I ha e clut hed th m fast

Wh t is the watchword? Whence cam st thou? Th cou try?

Od 'Tis not fo thee to know

Sem Ch Speak or thou d est a a ile traitor this day

Wilt not the watchword declare ere my sword finds t way to thy heart?

Od What! hast th u slain Rhesus?

Sem Ch N y I am a king thee about him who cam t slay us.

Od B of good heart pproach

Sem Ch Strike e ery man of you strike str ke home!

Od tay ev ry man of you!

Sem Ch No n lay on!

Od Ah! slay n t a f end

Semi Ch What is the wa ch w rd then?

Od Phœbu

Semi Ch R gh ! tay ev ry man his spear!

Dost know wh ther those men a e gone?

Od Somewhere h e I cau ht a sight of them

Semi Ch Close on th track ea h man of you or else must we ho t for d

O N y twe c nduct stra e to di turb our fri nds w th wild larms by ht

Exeunt o *rs* *us* *d* *n* *ou* *n* *s*

Ch Wh wa th t man who slipped a ay? Wh was h that ul loudly boast hi d ri g ir escapin m ? How hall I catch him now? to whom liken him? th ma h came by ht with fea less step passing th u h our ank nd the gua d we set Is I e a Thessalia r a dw ll r n som *sea oa t town of Locris*, o hath he hi hom mid the scattered isla ds f the m n? Who a *h* *s* *d* h n e came h ? What is h is fathe land What god doth he a ow s lo d f ll st s ?

Sem Ch Whose w rk is thi ? is t th deed of Odysseu ?

If o e may conjecture fr m his f rmer acts of course t is

Dost think so eally? Why f course.

He bold foe f r us.

Who is whom rt th u pr ing for valiancy?

Ody sseu

Pr se t th crafty weapons that a bber uses.

Ch O e b f he c m i to th s ty ith swimmin blea y yes, in rags a d tatt r clad his sword hid l n in his cloak. And lik som *agr*

menial he slunk about begging h s board his ha r all tou led and matted with f th and many a bitter curse he uttered against the royal house of the Atrei dæ as though *forsooth* he were to those chiefs opposed Would oh! would he had pe hed as was h s due ere e er h set foot on Phryg a s soil!

Semi Ch Whether it were really Odysseus or not, I am afeard

Ay surely for Hector will blame us sentinels.

What can he allege?

He will s s pect

What have we done? why art afeard?

By us d d pass—

Well who?

They who this night came to the Phrygian host

Enter CH RIOTEER.

Charioteer O cruel stroke of fate Woe woe!

Ch Hu h! be s l nt all! Crouch low for may be there com th someone into the snare

Cha Oh oh! dire mishap to the Thracian allies.

Ch Who is he that groans?

Cha Alack alack! woe is me and woe is thee O king of Thrace! How curst the sight of Troy to thee! how sa l the bl w that closed thy life!

Ch Who art thou? an ally? which? night s gloom hath dul ed these eyes I cannot clearly recognize thee

Cha Where can I find some Trojan chief? Where doth Hector take his rest under arms? Alack and w ll a-day! To which of the captain of the host am I to tell my tale? What suffer gs ours! What d rk deeds someo e hath wrought on us and gone his wa when h had wound up a clew of *sorrow mani* fest to e ery Thracian!

Ch From what I gather of this man s words, some calamity it seems, is befalling th Thracian host

Cha Lost is all our host our prince is dead slain by a treache ous blow Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! O the cruel angu sh of this bloody wound that inly racks my frame! Would I *were dead*! Was it to d e this inglo io is death that Rhesus and I did come to Troy?

Ch This is plain language in no riddles he de clares the d sa ter all too clearly he asserts our fri nds destruct n

Cha A sorry deed it wa and more than that a deed most foul yea ti n e il doubly bad to d e w th glory if d e ne must i bitter ess eno h h I trow t him w o d es assuredly it is though to the li ng it ad l d gnity and h nour fo their house. But w like fools, ha e d ed a death of shame N soo had g eat Hecto given us our quarters and tol l u t e wat hwor l tha we la d us do n to l ep upon th g ound o ercome by weariness. No guard ou rmy set to wat h by n ght Our arm we set not n array no w re the wh ps hung ready n the h rses yokes, f ur p nce was told that you we e mas ers now nd had encamped hard on their hips so ca lessly we threw us down to l ep Now I n t thoughtful mind aw ke from my slumber and with u grudg ng hand d d measu e out the h r es feed expect n to harness them at dawn unto the fray

My counsel is we go and rouse the Lycians to the fifth watch as the lot ordained

Exit SEMI CHORUS *Enter* DIOMEDES *and* ODYSSEUS *cautiously with drawn swords*

Odysseus Didst not hear O Diomedes the clash of arms? or is it an idle noise that rings in my ears?

Diomedes Nay tis the rattle of steel harness on the chariot rails me too did fear assail till I perceived twas but the clang of horses chains

Od Beware thou stumble not upon the guard in the darkness

Di I will take good care how I advance even in this gloom

Od If however thou shouldst rouse them dost know their watchword?

Di Yea tis Phœbus I heard Dolon use it

They enter the tent then return

Od Ha! the foe I see have left this bivouac

Di Yet Dolon surely said that here was Hector s couch against whom this sword of mine is drawn

Od What can it mean? Is his company withdrawn elsewhere?

Di Perhaps to form some stratagem against us

Od Like enough for Hector now is grown quite bold by reason of his victory

Di What then are we to do Odysseus? we have not found our man asleep our hopes are dashed

Od Let us to the fleet with what speed we may Some god whiche er it be that gives him his good luck is preserving him gainst fate we must not strive

Di Well we twain must go against Æneas or Paris most hateful of Phrygians and with our swords cut off their heads

Od How pray in the darkness canst thou find them amid a hostile army and slay them without risk?

Di Yet twere base to go unto the Agrive ships if we have worked the enemy no harm

Od What! no harm! Have we not slain Dolon who spied upon the anchored fleet and have we not his spoils safe here? Dost thou expect to sack the entire camp? Be led by me let us return and good luck go with us!

ATHENA *appears*

Athena Whither away from the Trojan ranks with sorrow gnawing at your hearts because fortune granteth not you twain to slay Hector or Paris? Have ye not heard that Rhesus is come to succour Troy in no mean sort? If he survive this night until to morrow s dawn neither Achilles nor Aias stout spearman can stay him from utterly destroying the Argive fleet razing its palisades and carrying the on slaught of his lance far and wide within the gates slay him and all is thine let Hector s sleep alone nor hope to leave him a weltering trunk for he shall find death at another hand

Od Queen Athena tis the well known accent of thy voice I hear for thou art ever at my side to help me in my toil Tell us where the warrior lies asleep in what part of the barbarian army he is stationed

Ath Here lies he close at hand not marshalled with the other troops but outside the ranks hath Hector given him quarters till night gives place to day And nigh him are tethered his white steeds to his Thracian chariot easy to see in the darkness glossy white are they like to the plumage of a river swan Slay their master and bear them off a glorious prize to any home for nowhere else in all the world is such a splendid team to be found

Od Diomedes either do thou slay the Thracian folk or leave that to me while thy care must be the horses

Di I will do the killing and do thou look to the steeds For thou art well versed in clever tricks, and hast a ready wit And tis right to allot a man to the work he can best perform

Ath Lo! yonder I see Paris coming towards us he hath heard maybe from the guard a rumour vague that foes are near

Di Are others with him or cometh he alone?

Ath Alone to Hector s couch he seems to wend his way to announce to him that spies are in the camp

Di Ought not he to head the list of slain?

Ath Thou canst not o erreach Destiny And it is not decreed that he should fall by thy hand but hasten on thy mission of slaughter fore ordained (*exeunt* ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDES) while I feigning to be Cypris his ally and to aid him in his efforts will answer thy foe with cheating words Thus much I have told you but the fated victim knoweth not nor hath he heard one word for all he is so near

Enter PARIS

Paris To thee I call general and brother Hector! Sleep st thou? shouldst not thou awake? Some foe man draws anigh our host or thieves maybe or spies

Ath Courage! lo! Cypris watches o er thee in gracious mood Thy warfare is my care for I do not forget the honour thou once didst me and I thank thee for thy good service And now when the host of Troy is triumphant am I come bringing to thee a powerful friend the Thracian child of the Muse the heavenly songstress whose father s name is Strymon

Pa Ever unto this city and to me a kind friend art thou and I am sure that decision I then made conferred upon this city the highest treasure life affords in thy person I heard a vague report and so I came for there prevailed amongst the guard a rumour that Achæan spies are here One man that saw them not saith so while another that saw them come cannot describe them and so I am on my way to Hector s tent

Ath Fear naught all is quiet in the host and Hector is gone to assign a sleeping place to the Thracian army

Pa Thou dost persuade me and I believe thy words and will go to guard my post free of fear

Ath Go for tis my pleasure ever to watch thy interests that so I may see my allies prosperous Yea and thou too shalt recognize my zeal *Exit* PARIS

Enter ODYSSEUS *and* DIOMEDES

Muse one of th sisters nine that have honour among the wise, am here having seen the piteous death his foes have dealt my darling son. Yet shall the crafty Odysseus, that slew him one day here after pay a fitting penalty O my son thy mother's grief, I mourn for thee in self taught strains of woe! What a journey thou didst make to Troy a very path of woe and sorrow! starting spite of all my warnings and thy father's earnest prayers, in defiance of us. Woe is me for thee my dear dear son! Ah, woe! my son, my son!

Ch. I too, bewail and mourn thy son as far as one can who hath no common tie of kin.

Muse Curses on the son of Œneus! Curses on Laertes' child! who hath reft me of my fair son and made me childless! and on that woman too, that left her home in Hellas, and sailed hither with her Phrygian paramour bringing death to thee my dearest son, neath the walls, and stripping countless cities of their heroes brave Deep deep the wounds, son of Philammon, hast thou inflicted on my heart in life nor less in Hades halls. Yea, for twas thy pride thy own undoing and thy rivalry with us Muses that made me mother of this poor son of mine. For as I crossed the river streams I came too nigh to Strymon's fruitful couch, that day we Muses came unto the brow of Mount Pangaeus with its soil of gold with all our music furnished forth for one great trial of music skill with that clever Thracian bard and him we reft of sight even Thamyris, the man who oft reviled our craft. Anon when I gave birth to thee, because I felt shame of my sisters and my maiden years, I sent thee to the swirling stream of thy sire the water god and Strymon did not entrust thy nurture to mortal hands, but to the fountain nymphs Then wast thou reared most fairly by the maiden nymphs, and didst rule o'er Thrace leader among men my child So long as thou didst range thy native land in quest of bloody deeds of prowess I feared not for thy death, but I bade thee never set out for Troy town for well I knew thy doom but Hector's messages and those countless embassies urged thee to go and help thy friends. This was thy doom. Athena thou alone art to blame for his death (neither Odysseus nor the son of Tydeus[1] had aught to do with it) think not it hath escaped mine eye. And yet we sister Muses do special honour to thy city, thy land we chiefly haunt yea, and Orpheus, own cousin of the dead whom thou hast slain did for thee unfold those dark mysteries with their torch processions. Musaeus, too, thy holy citizen of all men most advanced in lore him did Phoebus with his sisters train And here is my reward for this dead in my arms I hold my child and mourn for him. Henceforth no other learned man I'll bring to thee

Ch. Vainly it seems the Thracian charioteer reviled us with plotting this man's murder Hector

He. I knew it it needed no seer to say that he had perished by the arts of Odysseus. Now I when I saw the Hellene host camped in my land of course would not hesitate to send heralds to my friends, bidding them come and help my country and so I sent and he as in duty bound came my toils to share It grieves me sorely to see him dead and now am I ready to raise a tomb for him and burn at his pyre great store of fine raiment for he came as a friend and in sorrow is he gone hence.

Muse He shall not descend into earth's darksome soil so earnest a prayer will I address to the bride of the nether world the daughter of the goddess Demeter giver of increase to release his soul and debtor as she is to me show that she honours the friends of Orpheus. Yet from henceforth will he be to me as one dead that seeth not the light for never again will he meet me or see his mother's face but will lurk hidden in a cavern of the land with its ... of silver restored to life no longer man but god even as the prophet of Bacchus did dwell in a grotto neath Pangaeus, a god whom his votaries honoured Lightly now shall I feel the grief of the sea goddess, for her son too must die First then for thee we sisters must chaunt our dirge and then for Achilles when Thetis mourns some day Him shall not Pallas, thy slayer save so true the shaft Loxias keeps in his quiver for him Ah me! the sorrows that a mother feels! the troubles of mortals! whoso fairly reckons you up will live and die a childless man and will have no children to bury [*Exit* ... *disappears*]

Ch. His mother now must see to this her son's burial but for thee Hector if thou wilt carry out any scheme now is the time for day is dawning

He. Go, bid our comrades arm at once yoke the horses torches in hand ye must wait the blast of the Etrurian trumpet for I hope with this day's mounting sun to pass beyond their lines and walls and fire the ships of the Achaeans, restoring freedom's light once more to Troy

Ch. Obedience to our prince! let us array ourselves in mail and go forth and these orders tell to our allies, and haply the god who is on our side will grant us victory

[1]Tydeus, father of Diomedes.
[2]Thamyris.
[3]Achilles.

when lo! through the thick gloom two men I see roaming around our army But when I roused my self they fled away and were gone once more and I called out to them to keep away from our army for I thought they might be thieves from our allies No answer made they so I too said no more but came back to my couch and slept again And lo! as I slept came a strange fancy o er me I saw methought as in a dream those steeds that I had groomed and used to drive stationed at Rhesus side with wolves mounted on their backs and these with their tails did lash the horses flanks and urge them on while they did snort and breathe fury from their nostrils striving in terror to unseat their riders Up I sprang to defend the horses from the brutes for the horror of the night scared me Then as I raised my head I heard the groans of dying men and a warm stream of new shed blood bespattered me where I lay close to my murdered master as he gave up the ghost To my feet I start but all unarmed and as I peer about and grope to find my sword a stalwart hand from somewhere nigh dealt me a sword thrust beneath the ribs I know the sword that dealt that blow from the deep gaping wound it gave me Down on my face I fell while they fled clean away with steeds and chariot Alack alack! Tortured with pain too weak to stand a piteous object I! I know what happened for I saw it but how the victims met their death I cannot say nor whose the hand that smote them but I can well surmise we have our friends to thank for this mischance

Ch O charioteer of Thrace s hapless king never suspect that any but foes have had a hand in this Lo! Hector himself is here apprized of thy mischance he sympathizes as he should with thy hard fate *Enter* HECTOR

He Ye villains who have caused this mischief dire how came the foemen s spies without your knowledge to your shame and spread destruction through the host and you drove them not away as they passed in or out? Who but you shall pay the penalty for this? You I say were stationed here to guard the host But they are gone without a wound with many a scoff at Phrygian cowardice and at me their leader Now mark ye this—by father Zeus I swear—at least the scourge if not the headsman s axe awaits such conduct else count Hector a thing of naught a mere coward

Ch Woe woe is me! A grievous grievous woe came on me I can see great lord of my city in the hour that I brought my news to thee that the Argive host was kindling fires about the ships for by the springs of Simois I vow my eye kept sleepless watch by night nor did I slumber or sleep O be not angered with me my lord I am guiltless of all yet if hereafter thou find that I in word or deed have done amiss bury me alive beneath the earth I ask no mercy

Cha Why threaten these? Why try to undermine my poor barbarian wit by crafty words barbarian thou thyself? Thou didst this deed nor they who have suffered all nor we by wounds disabled will believe it was any other A long and subtle speech thou lt need to prove to me thou didst not slay thy friends because thou didst covet the horses and to gain them didst murder thine own allies after bidding them come so straitly They came and they are dead Why Paris found more decent means to shame the rights of hospitality than thou with thy slaughter of thy allies Never tell me some Argive came and slaughtered us Who could have passed the Trojan lines and come against us without detection? Thou and thy Phrygian troops were camped in front of us Who was wounded who was slain amongst thy friends when that foe thou speak st of came? Twas we were wounded while some have met a sterner fate and said farewell to heaven s light Briefly then no Achæan do I blame For what enemy could have come and found the lowly bed of Rhesus in the dark unless some deity were guiding the murderers steps? They did not so much as know of his arrival No tis thy plot this!

He Tis many a long year now since I have had to do with allies aye ever since Achæa s host settled in this land and never an ill word have I known them say of me but with thee I am to make a beginning Never may such longing for horses seize me that I should slay my friends! This is the work of Odysseus Who of all the Argives but he would have devised or carried out such a deed? I fear him much and somewhat my mind misgives me lest he have met and slain Dolon as well for tis long since he set out nor yet appears

Cha I know not this Odysseus of whom thou speakest Twas no foe s hand that smote me

He Well keep that opinion for thyself if it please thee

Cha O land of my fathers would I might die in thee!

He Die! No! Enough are those already dead

Cha Where am I to turn I ask thee reft of my master now?

He My house shall shelter thee and cure thee of thy hurt

Cha How shall murderers hands care for me?

He This fellow will never have done repeating the same story

Cha Curses on the doer of this deed! On thee my tongue doth fix no charge as thou complainest but Justice is over all

He Ho! take him hence! Carry him to my palace and tend him carefully that he may have no fault to find And you must go to those upon the walls to Priam and his aged councillors and tell them to give orders for the burial of the dead at the place where folk turn from the road to rest

CHARIOTEER *is carried off*

Ch Why with what intent doth fortune change and bring Troy once again to mourning after her famous victory? See see! O look! What goddess O king is hovering o er our heads bearing in her hands as on a bier the warrior slain but now? I shudder at this sight of woe THE MUSE *appears*

The Muse Behold me sons of Troy! Lo! I the

towards you? Perdition catch him, but no! he is my master still; yet is he proved a very traitor to his nearest and dearest.

At. And who 'mongst men is not? Art learning only now, that every single man cares for himself more than for his neighbour, some from honest motives, others for mere gain's sake? seeing that to indulge his passion their father has ceased to love these children.

N. Go, children, within the house; all will be well. Do thou keep them as far away as may be, and bring them not near their mother in her evil hour. For ere this have I seen her eyeing them savagely, as though she were minded to do them some hurt, and well I know she will not cease from her fury till she have pounced on some victim. At least may she turn her hand against her foes, and not against her friends.

Medea (*within*). Ah, me! a wretched suffering woman I! O would that I could die!

N. 'Tis as I said, my dear children; wild fancies stir your mother's heart, wild fury goads her on. Into the house without delay, come not near her eye, approach her not, beware her savage mood, the fell tempest of her reckless heart. In, in with what speed ye may. For 'tis plain she will soon redouble her fury; that cry is but the herald of the gathering storm-cloud whose lightning soon will flash; what will her proud restless soul, in the anguish of despair, be guilty of?

Exit ATTENDANT *with the children.*

Med. (*within*). Ah, me! the agony I have suffered, deep enough to call for these laments! Curse you and your father too, ye children damned, sons of a doomed mother! Ruin seize the whole family!

N. Ah me! ah me! the pity of it! Why, pray, do thy children share their father's crime? Why hatest thou them? Woe is you, poor children, how do I grieve for you lest ye suffer some outrage! Strange are the tempers of princes, and maybe because they seldom have to obey, and mostly lord it over others, change they their mood with difficulty. 'Tis better then to have been trained to live on equal terms. Be it mine to reach old age, not in proud pomp, but in security! Moderation wins the day first as a better word for men to use, and likewise it is far the best course for them to pursue; but greatness that doth o'erreach itself, brings no blessing to mortal men; but pays a penalty of greater ruin whenever fortune is wroth with a family.

Enter CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN.

Chorus. I heard the voice, uplifted loud, of our poor Colchian lady, nor yet is she quiet; speak, aged dame, for as I stood by the house with double gates I heard a voice of weeping from within, and I do grieve, lady, for the sorrows of this house, for it hath won my love.

N. 'Tis a house no more; all that is passed away long since; a royal bride keeps Jason at her side, while our mistress pines away in her bower, finding no comfort for her soul in aught her friends can say.

Med. (*within*). Oh, oh! Would that Heaven's levin bolt would cleave this head in twain! What gain is life to me? Woe, woe is me! O, to die and win release, quitting this loathed existence!

Ch. Didst hear, O Zeus, thou earth, and thou, O light, the piteous note of woe the hapless wife is uttering? How shall a yearning for that insatiate resting-place ever hasten for thee, poor reckless one, the end that death alone can bring? Never pray for that. And if thy lord prefers a fresh love, be not angered with him for that; Zeus will judge 'twixt thee and him herein. Then mourn not for thy husband's loss too much, nor waste thyself away.

Med. (*within*). Great Themis, and husband of Themis, behold what I am suffering now, though I did bind that accursed one, my husband, by strong oaths to me! O, to see him and his bride some day brought to utter destruction, they and their house with them, for that they presume to wrong me thus unprovoked. O my father, my country, that I have left to my shame, after slaying my own brother.

N. Do ye hear her words, how loudly she adjures Themis, oft invoked, and Zeus, whom men regard as keeper of their oaths? On no mere trifle surely will our mistress spend her rage.

Ch. Would that she would come forth for us to see, and listen to the words of counsel we might give, if haply she might lay aside the fierce fury of her wrath, and her temper stern. Never be my zeal at any rate denied my friends! But go thou and bring her hither outside the house, and tell her this our friendly thought; haste thee ere she do some mischief to those inside the house, for this sorrow of hers is mounting high.

N. This will I do; but I have my doubts whether I shall persuade my mistress; still willingly will I undertake this trouble for you; albeit, she glares upon her servants with the look of a lioness with cubs, whenso anyone draws nigh to speak to her. Wert thou to call the men of old time rude uncultured boors thou wouldst not err, seeing that they devised their hymns for festive occasions, for banquets, and to grace the board, a pleasure to catch the ear shed o'er our life, but no man hath found a way to allay hated grief by music and the minstrel's varied strain, whence arise slaughters and fell strokes of fate to o'erthrow the homes of men. And yet this were surely a gain, to heal men's wounds by music's spell, but why tune they their idle song where rich banquets are spread? for of itself doth the rich banquet, set before them, afford to men delight.

Exit NURSE.

Ch. I heard a bitter cry of lamentation! loudly, bitterly she calls on the traitor of her marriage bed, her perfidious spouse; by grievous wrongs oppressed she invokes Themis, bride of Zeus, witness of oaths, who brought her unto Hellas, the land that fronts the strand of Asia, o'er the sea by night through ocean's boundless gate.

Enter MEDEA.

Med. From the house I have come forth, Corinthian ladies, for fear lest you be blaming me; for well I know that amongst men many by showing

MEDEA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

NURSE OF MEDEA	CREON
ATTENDANT *of her children*	JASON
MEDEA	ÆGEUS
CHORUS OF CORINTHIAN WOMEN	MESSENGER

THE TWO SONS OF JASON AND MEDEA

Before the Palace of Creon at Corinth *Enter* NURSE

Nurse Ah! would to Heaven the good ship Argo ne er had sped its course to the Colchian land through the misty blue Symplegades nor ever in the glens of Pelion the pine been felled to furnish with oars the chieftain s hands who went to fetch the golden fleece for Pelias for then would my own mistress Medea never have sailed to the turrets of Iolcos her soul with love for Jason smitten nor would she have beguiled the daughters of Pelias to slay their father and come to live here in the land of Corinth with her husband and children where her exile found favour with th citizens to whose land she had come and in all things of her own accord was she at one with Jason the greatest safeguard this when wife and husband do agree but now their love is all turned to hate and tenderest ties are weak For Jason hath betrayed his own children and my mis tress dear for the love of a royal bride for he hath wedded the daughter of Creon lord of this land While Medea his hapless wife thus scorned appeals to the oaths he swore recalls the strong pledge his right hand gave and bids heaven be witness what requital she is finding from Jason And here she lies fasting yielding her body to her grief wasting away in tears ever since she learnt that she was wronged by her husband never lifting her eye nor raising her face from off the ground and she lends as deaf an ear to her friend s warning as if she were a rock or ocean billow save when she turns her snow white neck aside and softly to herself bemoans her father dear her country and her home which she gave up to come hither with the man who now holds her in dishonour She poor lady hath by sad experience learnt how good a thing it is never to quit one s native land And she hates her children now and feels no joy at seeing them I am afeard she may con trive some untoward scheme for her mood is dan gerous nor will she brook her cruel treatment full well I know her and I much do dread that she will plunge the keen sword through their heart stealing without a word into the chamber where their mar riage couch is spread or else that she will slay the prince and bridegroom too and so find some calam ity still more grievous than the present for dreadful is her wrath verily the man that doth incur her hate will have no easy task to raise o er her a song of triumph Lo! where her sons come hither from their childish sports little they reck of their mother s woes for the soul of the young is no friend to sor row

Enter ATTENDANT *with the Children*

Attendant Why dost thou so long my lady s own handmaid stand here at the gate alone loudly la menting to thyself the piteous tale? how comes it that Medea will have thee leave her to herself?

Nu Old man attendant on the sons of Jason our master s fortunes when they go awry make good slaves grieve and touch their hearts Oh! I have come to such a pitch of grief that there stole a yearn ing wish upon me to come forth hither and proclaim to heaven and earth my mistress s hard fate

At What! has not the poor lady ceased yet from her lamentation?

Nu Would I were as thou art! the mischief is but now beginning it has not reached its climax yet

At O foolish one if I may call my mistress such a name how little she recks of evils yet more recent!

Nu What mean st old man? grudge not to tell me

At Tis naught I do repent me even of the words I have spoken

Nu Nay by thy beard I conjure thee hide it not from thy fellow slave I will be silent if need be on that text

At I heard one say pretending not to listen as I approached the place where our greybeards sit play ing draughts near Pirene s sacred spring that Creon the ruler of this land is bent on driving these chil dren and their mother from the boundaries of Cor inth but I know not whether the news is to be relied upon and would fain it were not

Nu What! will Jason brook such treatment of his sons even though he be at variance with their mother?

At Old ties give way to new he bears no longer any love to this family

Nu Undone it seems are we if to old woes fresh ones we add ere we have drained the former to the dregs

At Hold thou thy peace say not a word of this tis no time for our mistress to learn hereof

Nu O children do ye hear how your father feels

towards you? Perdition catch him but no! he is my master still yet is he proved a very traitor to his nearest and dearest.

A And who mongst men is not? Art learning only now that every single man cares for himself more than for his neighbour some from honest motives, others for mere gain's sake? seeing that to indulge his passion their father has ceased to love these children

N Go, children, within the house all will be well. Do thou keep them as far away as may be and bring them not near their mother in her evil hour For ere this have I seen her eyeing them savagely as though she were minded to do them some hurt and well I know she will not cease from her fury till she have pounced on some victim At least may she turn her hand against her foes, and not against her friends.

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Ch Didst hear O Zeus thou earth and thou O light the piteous note of woe the hapless wife is uttering? How shall a yearning for that insatiate resting place ever hasten for thee poor reckless one the end that death alone can bring? Never pray for that And if thy lord prefers a fresh love be not angered with him for that Zeus will judge 'twixt thee and him herein Then mourn not for thy husband's loss too much nor waste thyself away

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Ch Would that she would come forth for us to see and listen to the words of counsel we might give if haply she might lay aside the fierce fury of her wrath and her temper stern. Never be my zeal at any rate denied my friends! But go thou and bring her hither outside the house and tell her this our friendly thought haste thee ere she do some mischief to those inside the house for this sorrow of hers is mounting high.

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Enter MEDEA

Med From the house I have come forth Corinthian ladies, for fear lest ye be blaming me for well I know that amongst men many by showing

pride have gotten them an ill name and a reputation for indifference both those who shun men s gaze and those who move amid the stranger crowd and likewise they who choose a quiet walk in life For there is no just discernment in the eyes of men for they or ever they have surely learnt their neighbour s heart loathe him at first sight though never wronged by him and so a stranger most of all should adopt a city s views nor do I commend that citizen who in the stubbornness of his heart from churlishness resents the city s will

But on me hath fallen this unforeseen disaster and sapped my life ruined I am and long to resign the boon of existence kind friends and die For he who was all the world to me as well thou knowest hath turned out the veriest villain my own husband Of all things that have life and sense we women are the most hapless creatures first must we buy a husband at an exorbitant price and o er ourselves a tyrant set which is an evil worse than the first and herein lies the most important issue whether our choice be good or bad For divorce is discreditable to women nor can we disown our lords Next must the wife oming as she does to ways and customs new since she hath not learnt the lesson in her home have a diviner s eye to see how best to treat the partner of her life If haply we perform these tasks with thoroughness and tact and the husband live with us without resenting the yoke our life is a happy one if not twere best to die But when a man is vexed with what he finds indoors he goeth forth and rids his soul of its disgust betaking him to some friend or comrade of like age whilst we must needs regard his single self

And yet they say we live secure at home while they are at the wars with their sorry reasoning for I would gladly take my stand in battle array three times o er than once give birth But enough! this language suits not thee as it does me thou hast a city here a father s house some joy in life and friends to share thy thoughts but I am destitute without a city and therefore s orned by my husband a captive I from a foreign shore with no mother brother or kinsman in whom to find a new haven of refuge from this calamity Wherefore this one boon and only this I wish to win from thee—thy silence if haply I can some way or means devise to avenge me on my husband for this cruel treatment and on the man who gave to him his daughter and on her who is his wife For though a woman be timorous enough in all else and as regards courage a coward at the mere sight of steel yet in the moment she finds her honour wronged no heart is filled with deadlier thoughts than hers

Ch This will I do for thou wilt be taking a just vengeance on thy husband Medea That thou shouldst mourn thy lot surprises me not But lo! I see Creon king of this land coming hither to announce some new resolve

Enter CREON

Creon Hark thee Medea I bid thee take those sullen looks and angry thoughts against thy husband forth from this land in exile and with thee take both thy children and that without delay for I am judge in this sentence and I will not return unto my house till I banish thee beyond the borders of the land

Med Ah me! now is utter destruction come upon me unhappy that I am! For my enemies are bearing down on me full sail nor have I any landing place to come at in my trouble Yet for all my wretched plight I will ask thee Creon wherefore dost thou drive me from the land?

Cr I fear thee—no longer need I veil my dread neath words—lest thou devise against my child some cureless ill Many things contribute to this fear of mine thou art a witch by nature expert in countless sorceries and thou art chafing for the loss of thy husband s affection I hear too so they tell me that thou dost threaten the father of the bride her husband and herself with some mischief wherefore I will take precautions ere our troubles come For tis better for me to incur thy hatred now lady than to soften my heart and bitterly repent it hereafter

Med Alas! this is not now the first time but oft before O Creon hath my reputation injured me and caused sore mischief Wherefore whoso is wise in his generation ought never to have his children taught to be too clever for besides the reputation they get for idleness they purchase bitter odium from the citizens For if thou shouldst import new learning amongst dullards thou wilt be thou ht a useless trifler void of knowledge while if thy fame in the city o ertops that of the pretenders to cunning knowledge thou wilt win their dislike I too myself share in this ill luck Some think me clever and hate me others say I am too reserved and some the very reverse others find me hard to please and not so very clever after all Be that as it may thou dost fear me lest I bring on thee something to mar thy harmony Fear me not Creon my position scarce is such that I should seek to quarrel with princes Why should I for how hast thou injured me? Thou hast betrothed thy daughter where thy fancy prompted thee No tis my husband I hate though I doubt not thou hast acted wisely herein And now I grudge not thy prosperity betroth thy child good luck to thee but let me abide in this land for though I have been wronged I will be still and yield to my superiors

Cr Thy words are soft to hear but much I dread lest thou art devising some mischief in thy heart and less than ever do I trust thee now for a cunning woman and man likewise is easier to guard against when quick tempered than when taciturn Nay begone at once! speak me no speeches for this is decreed nor hast thou any art whereby thou shalt abide amongst us since thou hatest me

Med O say not so! by thy knees and by thy daughter newly wed I do implore!

Cr Thou wastest words thou wilt never persuade me

Med What wilt thou banish me and to my prayers no pity yield?

Cr. I will, for I love not thee above my own family.

Med. O my country! what fond memories I have of thee in this hour!

Cr. Yea, for I myself love my city best of all things save my children.

Med. Ah me! ah me! to mortal man how dread a scourge is love!

Cr. That, I deem, is according to the turn our fortunes take.

Med. O Zeus! let not the author of these my troubles escape thee.

Cr. Begone, thou silly woman, and free me from my toil.

Med. The toil is mine, no lack of it.

Cr. Soon wilt thou be thrust out forcibly by the hand of servants.

Med. Not that, not that! I do entreat thee, Creon!

Cr. Thou wilt cause disturbance yet, it seems.

Med. I will begone; I ask thee not this boon to grant.

Cr. Why then this violence? why dost thou not depart?

Med. Suffer me to abide this single day and devise some plan for the manner of my exile, and means of living for my children, since their father cares not to provide his babes therewith. Then pity them; thou too hast children of thine own; thou needs must have a kindly heart. For my own lot I care naught, though I an exile am, but for those babes I weep, that they should learn what sorrow means.

Cr. Mine is a nature anything but harsh; full oft by showing pity have I suffered shipwreck; and now albeit I clearly see my error, yet shalt thou gain this request, lady; but I do forewarn thee, if tomorrow's rising sun shall find thee and thy children within the borders of this land, thou diest; my word is spoken and it will not lie. So now, if abide thou must, stay this one day only, for in it thou canst not do any of the fearful deeds I dread. [*Exit.*]

Ch. Ah! poor lady, woe is thee! Alas, for thy sorrows! Whither wilt thou turn? What protection, what home or country to save thee from thy troubles wilt thou find? O Medea, in what a hopeless sea of misery heaven hath plunged thee!

Med. On all sides sorrow pens me in. Who shall gainsay this? But all is not yet lost! think not so. Still are there troubles in store for the new bride, and for her bridegroom no light toil. Dost think I would ever have fawned on yonder man, unless to gain some end or form some scheme? Nay, I would not so much as have spoken to him or touched him with my hand. But he has in folly so far stepped in, that, though he might have checked my plot by banishing me from the land, he hath allowed me to abide this day, in which I will lay low in death three of my enemies—a father and his daughter and my husband too. Now, though I have many ways to compass their deaths, I am not sure, friends, which I am to try first. Shall I set fire to the bridal mansion, or plunge the whetted sword through their hearts, softly stealing into the chamber where their couch is spread? One thing stands in my way. If I am caught making my way into the chamber, intent on my design, I shall be put to death and cause my foes to mock. 'Twere best to take the shortest way—the way we women are most skilled in—by poison to destroy them. Well, suppose them dead; what city will receive me? What friendly host will give me a shelter in his land, a home secure, and save my soul alive? None. So I will wait yet a little while in case some tower of defence rise up for me; then will I proceed to this bloody deed in crafty silence; but if some unexpected mischance drive me forth, I will with mine own hand seize the sword, even though I die for it, and slay them, and go forth on my bold path of daring. By that dread queen whom I revere before all others and have chosen to share my task, by Hecate who dwells within my inmost chamber, not one of them shall wound my heart and rue it not. Bitter and sad will I make their marriage for them; bitter shall be the wooing of it, bitter my exile from the land. Up, then, Medea, spare not the secrets of thy art in plotting and devising; on to the danger. Now comes a struggle needing courage. Dost see what thou art suffering? 'Tis not for thee to be a laughing-stock to the race of Sisyphus by reason of this wedding of Jason, sprung, as thou art, from a noble sire, and of the Sun-god's race. Thou hast cunning; and more than this, we women, though by nature little apt for virtuous deeds, are most expert to fashion any mischief.

Ch. Back to their source the holy rivers turn their tide. Order and the universe are being reversed. 'Tis men whose counsels are treacherous, whose oath by heaven is no longer sure. Rumour shall bring a change o'er my life, bringing it into good repute. Honour's dawn is breaking for woman's sex; no more shall the foul tongue of slander fix upon us. The songs of the poets of old shall cease to make our faithlessness their theme. Phoebus, lord of minstrelsy, hath not implanted in our mind the gift of heavenly song, else had I sung an answering strain to the race of males, for time's long chapter affords many a theme on their sex as well as ours. With mind distraught didst thou thy father's house desert on thy voyage betwixt ocean's twin rocks, and on a foreign strand thou dwellest thy bed left husbandless, poor lady, and thou an exile from this land, dishonoured, persecuted. Gone is the grace that oaths once had. Through all the breadth of Hellas honour is found no more; to heaven hath it sped away. For thee no father's house is open, woe is thee! to be a haven from the troublous storm, while o'er thy home is set another queen, the bride that is preferred to thee.

Enter JASON.

Jas. It is not now I first remark, but oft ere this, how unruly a pest is a harsh temper. For instance, thou, hadst thou but patiently endured the will of thy superiors, mightest have remained here in this land and house, but now for thy idle words wilt thou be banished. Thy words are naught to me. Cease

not to call Jason basest of men but for those words thou has spoken against our rulers count it all gain that exile is thy only punishment I ever tried to check the outbursts of the angry monarch and would have had thee stay but thou wouldst not forego thy silly rage always reviling our rulers and so thou wilt be banished Yet even after all this I weary not of my goodwill but am come with thus much forethought lady that thou mayst not be destitute nor want for aught when with thy sons thou art cast out Many an evil doth exile bring in its train with it for even though thou hatest me *never will I harbour hard thoughts of thee*

Med Thou craven villain (for that is the only name my tongue can find for thee a foul reproach on thy unmanliness)! comest thou to me thou most hated foe of gods of me and of all mankind? Tis no proof of courage or hardihood to confront thy friends after injuring them but that worst of all human diseases—loss of shame Yet hast thou done well to come for I shall ea e my soul by reviling thee and thou wilt be vexed at my recital I will begin at the very beginning I saved thy life as every Hellene knows who sailed with thee aboard the good ship Argo when thou wert sent to tame and yoke fire breathing bulls and to sow the deadly tilth Yea and I slew the dragon which guarded the golden fleece keeping sleepless watch o er it with many a *wreathed coil and I raised for thee a beacon of* deliverance Father and home of my free will I left and came with thee to Iolcos neath Pelion s hills for my love was stronger than my prudence Next I caused the death of Pelias by a doom most grievous even by his own children s hand beguiling them of all their fear All this have I done for thee thou traitor! and thou hast cast me over taking to thyself another wife though children have been born to us Hadst thou been childless still I could have par doned thy desire for this new union Gone is now the trust I put in oaths I cannot even understand whether thou thinkest that the gods o old no longer rule or that fresh decrees are now in vogue amongst mankind for thy conscience must tell thee thou hast not kept faith with me Ah! poor right hand which thou didst often grasp These knees thou didst embrace! All in vain I suffered a traitor to touch me! How short of my hopes I am fallen! But come I will deal with thee as though thou wert my friend Yet what kindness can I expect from one so base as thee? but yet I will do it for my questioning will show thee yet more base Whither can I turn me now? to my father s house to my own country which I for thee deserted to come hither? to the hapless daughters of Pelias? A glad welcome I trow would they give me in their home whose father s death I compassed! My case stands even thus I am become the bitter foe to those of mine own home and those whom I need ne er have wronged I have made mine enemies to pleasure thee Wherefore to reward me for this thou hast made me doubly blest in the eyes of many a wife in H llas and in thee I own a peerless trusty lord O woe is me if indeed I am to be cast forth an exile from the land without one friend one lone woman with her babes *forlorn*! Yea a fine reproach to thee in thy bridal hour that thy children and the wife who saved thy life are beggars and vagabonds! O Zeus! why hast thou granted unto man clear signs to know the sham in gold while on man s brow no brand is stamped whereby to gauge the villain s heart?

Ch There is a something terrible and past all cure when quarrels arise twixt those who are near and dear

Ja Needs must I now it seems turn orator and *like a good helmsman on a ship with close reefed* sails weather that wearisome tongue of thine Now I believe since thou wilt exaggerate thy favours, that to Cypris alone of gods or men I owe the safety of my voyage Thou hast a subtle wit enough yet were it a hateful thing for me to say that the Love god constrained thee by his resistless shaft to save my life However I will not reckon this too nicely twas kindly done however thou didst serve me. Yet for my safety hast thou received more than ever thou gavest as I will show First thou dwellest in Hellas instead of thy barbarian land and hast learnt what justice means and how to live by law not by the dictates of brute force and all the Hellenes rec ognize thy cleverness and thou hast gained a name whereas if thou hadst dwelt upon the confines of *the earth no tongue had mentioned thee Give* me no gold within my halls nor skill to sing a fairer strain than ever Orpheus sang unless therewith my fame be spread abroad! So much I say to thee about my own toils for twas thou didst challen e me to this retort As for the taunts thou urgest against my marriage with the princess I will prove to thee first that I am prudent herein next chastened in my love and last a powerful friend to thee and to thy sons only hold thy peace Since I have here withdrawn from Iolcos with many a hopeless trouble at my back what happier device could I *an exile frame* than marriage with the daughter of the king? Tis not because I loathe thee for my wife—the thou ht *that rankles in thy heart tis not becau e I am* smitten with desire for a new bride nor yet that I am eager to vie with others in begetting many chil dren for those we have are quite enough and I do not complain Nay tis that we—and this is most important—may dwell in comfort instead of suf fering want (for well I know that every whilom friend avoids the poor) and that I might rear my sons as doth befit my house further that I mi ht be the father of brothers for the children thou hast borne and raise these to the same high rank uniting the family in one—to my lasting bliss Thou in deed hast no need of more children but me it prof its to help my present family by that which is to be Have I miscarried here? Not even thou wouldest say so unless a rival s charms rankled in thy bosom No but you women have such strange ideas, that you think all is well so long as your married life runs smooth but if some mischance occur to ruffle your love *all that was good and lovely erst* you reckon

as your foes. Yea, men should have begotten children from some other source, no female race existing; thus would no evil ever have fallen on mankind.

Ch. This speech, O Jason, hast thou with specious art arranged; but yet I think—albeit in saying so I betray indiscretion—that thou hast sinned in casting over thy wife.

Med. No doubt I differ from the mass of men on many points; for to my mind whoso hath skill to fence with words in an unjust cause, incurs the heaviest penalty; for such an one, confident that he can cast a decent veil of words o'er his injustice, dares to practise it; and yet he is not so very clever after all. So do not thou put forth thy specious pleas and clever words to me now, for one word of mine will lay thee low. Hadst thou not had a villain's heart, thou shouldst have gained my consent, then made this match, instead of hiding it from those who loved thee.

Ja. Thou wouldst have lent me ready aid, no doubt, in this proposal, if I had told thee of my marriage, seeing that not even now canst thou restrain thy soul's hot fury.

Med. This was not what restrained thee; but thine eye was turned towards old age, and a foreign wife began to appear a shame to thee.

Ja. Be well assured of this: 'twas not for the woman's sake I wedded the king's daughter, my present wife; but, as I have already told thee, I wished to insure thy safety and to be the father of royal sons bound by blood to my own children—a bulwark to our house.

Med. May that prosperity, whose end is woe, ne'er be mine, nor such wealth as would ever sting my heart!

Ja. Change that prayer as I will teach thee, and thou wilt show more wisdom. Never let happiness appear in sorrow's guise, nor, when thy fortune smiles, pretend she frowns!

Med. Mock on; thou hast a place of refuge; I am alone, an exile soon to be.

Ja. Thy own free choice was this; blame no one else.

Med. What did I do? Marry, then betray thee?

Ja. Against the king thou didst invoke an impious curse.

Med. On thy house too maybe I bring the curse.

Ja. Know this, I will no further dispute this point with thee. But, if thou wilt of my fortune somewhat take for the children or thyself to help thy exile, say on; for I am ready to grant it with ungrudging hand, yea and to send tokens to my friends elsewhere who shall treat thee well. If thou refuse this offer, thou wilt do a foolish deed, but if thou cease from anger the greater will be thy gain.

Med. I will have naught to do with friends of thine, naught will I receive of thee, offer it not to me; a villain's gifts can bring no blessing.

Ja. At least I call the gods to witness, that I am ready in all things to serve thee and thy children, but thou dost scorn my favours and thrustest thy friends stubbornly away; wherefore thy lot will be more bitter still.

Exit

Med. Away! By love for thy young bride entrapped, too long thou lingerest outside her chamber; go wed, for, if God will, thou shalt have such a marriage as thou wouldst fain refuse.

Ch. When in excess and past all limits Love doth come, he brings not glory or repute to man; but if the Cyprian queen in moderate might approach, no goddess is so full of charm as she. Never, O never, lady mine, discharge at me from thy golden bow a shaft invincible in passion's venom dipped. On me may chastity, heaven's fairest gift, look with a favouring eye; never may Cypris, goddess dread, fasten on me a temper to dispute, or restless jealousy, smiting my soul with mad desire for unlawful love, but may she hallow peaceful married life and shrewdly decide whom each of us shall wed. O my country, O my own dear home! God grant I may never be an outcast from my city, leading that cruel helpless life, whose every day is misery. Ere that may I this life complete and yield to death, ay, death; for there is no misery that doth surpass the loss of fatherland. I have seen with mine eyes, nor from the lips of others have I the lesson learnt; no city, not one friend doth pity thee in this thine awful woe. May he perish and find no favour, whoso hath not in him honour for his friends, freely unlocking his heart to them. Never shall he be friend of mine.

Enter ÆGEUS

Ægeus. All hail, Medea! no man knoweth fairer prelude to the greeting of friends than this.

Med. All hail to thee likewise, Ægeus, son of wise Pandion. Whence comest thou to this land?

Æg. From Phœbus' ancient oracle.

Med. What took thee on thy travels to the prophetic centre of the earth?

Æg. The wish to ask how I might raise up seed unto myself.

Med. Pray tell me, hast thou till now dragged on a childless life?

Æg. I have no child owing to the visitation of some god.

Med. Hast thou a wife, or hast thou never known the married state?

Æg. I have a wife joined to me in wedlock's bond.

Med. What said Phœbus to thee as to children?

Æg. Words too subtle for man to comprehend.

Med. Surely I may learn the god's answer?

Æg. Most assuredly, for it is just thy subtle wit it needs.

Med. What said the god? speak, if I may hear it.

Æg. He bade me "not loose the wineskin's pendent neck."

Med. Till when? what must thou do first, what country visit?

Æg. Till I to my native home return.

Med. What object hast thou in sailing to this land?

Æg. O'er Trœzen's realm is Pittheus king.

Med. Pelops' son, a man devout they say.

Æg. To him I fain would impart the oracle of the god.

Med. The man is shrewd and versed in such like lore.

Æg Aye and to me the dearest of all my warrior friends

Med Good luck to thee! success to all thy wishes!

Æg But why th t downcast eye that wasted cheek?

Med O Ægeus my husband has proved a monster of iniquity

Æg What meanest thou? explain to me clearly the cause of thy despondency

Med Jason is wronging me though I have given him no cause

Æg What hath he done? tell me more clearly

Med He is taking another wife to succeed me as mistress of his house

Æg Can he have brought himself to such a dastard deed?

Med Be assured thereof I whom he loved of yore am in dishonour now

Æg Hath he found a new love? or does he loathe thy bed?

Med Much in love is he! A traitor to his friend is he become

Æg Enough! if he is a villain as thou sayest

Med The alliance he is so much enamoured of is with a princess

Æg Who gives his daughter to him? go on I pray

Med Creon who is lord of this land of Corinth

Æg Lady I can well pardon thy grief

Med I am undone and more than that am banished from the land

Æg By whom? fresh wo this wo d of thine unfolds

Med Creon drives me forth in exile from Corinth

Æg Doth Jason allow it? This too I blame him for

Med Not in words but he will not stand out against it O I implore thee by this beard and by thy knees in suppliant posture pity O pity my sorrows do not see me cast forth forlorn but receive me in thy country to a seat within thy halls So may thy wish by heaven s grace be crowned with a full harvest of offspring and may thy life close in happiness! Thou knowest not the rare good luck thou findest here for I will make thy childlessness to cease and cause thee to beget fair issue so potent are the spells I know

Æg Lady on many grounds I am most fain to grant thee this thy boon first for the gods sake n xt for the children whom thou dost promise I hall bee r for in respect of this I am completely lost Tis thus with me if e er thou reach my land I will attempt to champion thee as I am bound to do Only on warning I do gi e thee first lady I will not from this land bear thee away yet if of thyself thou reach my halls there shalt thou bide in safety and I will never yield thee up to any man But from thi land escape without my aid for I have no wish to incur the blam of my allies as well

Med It shall b even so but s ou'lst thou pl dge thy word to this I should in all be well content with thee

Æg Surely thou dost trust me? or is there au ht that troubles thee?

Med Thee I trust but Pelias house and Creon are my foes Wherefore if thou art bound by an oath thou wilt not give me up to them when they come to drag me from the land but having entered into a compact and sworn by heaven as well thou wilt become my friend and disregard their o er tures Weak is any aid of mine whilst they have wealth and a princely house

Æg Lady thy words show much foresi ht so if this is thy will I do not refuse For I shall feel secure and safe if I have some pretext to offer to thy foes and thy case too the firmer stands Now name thy gods

Med Swear by the plain of Earth by Helios my father s sire and in one comprehensive oath by all the race of gods

Æg What shall I swear to do from what refrain? tell me that

Med Swear that thou wilt never of thyself expel me from thy land nor whil t life is thine permit any other one of my foes maybe to hale me thence if so he will

Æg By earth I swear by the sun god s holy beam and by all the host of heaven that I will stand fast to the terms I hear thee make

Med Tis enough If thou shouldst break this oath what curse dost thou invoke upon thyself?

Æg Whate er betides the impious

Med Go in peace all is well and I with what peed I may will to thy city come when I have wrought my purpose and obtained my wish

Exit ÆGEUS

Ch May Maia s princely son go with thee on thy way to bring thee to thy home and mayes thou attain that on which thy soul is et so firmly for to my mind thou seemest a generous man O Æ eus

Med O Zeus and Justice child of Zeus and sa god s light no will I triumph o er my foes kind friends on victory s road have I set forth good hope have I of wreaking vengeance on those I hate For where we were in most distress this strang r hath appeared to be a haven in my counsels to him will we make fast the cables of our ship when we come to the town and citadel of Pallas But now will I explain to thee my plans in full do not expect to hear a pleasant tale A servant of mine will I to Jason send and cra e an interview then when he comes I will address him with soft words say this plea es me and that is well even th marria with the princess which my treacherous lord is celebrating and add it suits us both twas well thou ht out then will I entreat that here my children may abide not that I mean to leave them in a hostile land for foes to flout but that I may slay the kin s daughter by guile For I will send them with gifts in their hands arrying them unto the bride to save them from banishment a robe of finest woof and a chaplet of gold And if these ornaments she take and put them on mi erably shall she die and likewise everyone who touches her with such fell poi

sons will I smear my gifts. And here I quit this theme but I shudd at th deed I must do next for I will slay th hildren I ha e borne there is noo shal take them from m toils and when I ha e utterl confounded Jason s house I w ll lea e th land escapi g punishment for my dear chil dren s m rd r af er m most unhol deed For I can o end re the ta ts of enemies, kind friend enough! what gain is life to me? I ha e no country home or refu e l fr O I did wrong that hour I left m father s hom persuaded by that Hellene s words, who now shall pa the penalt so help me God Ne er shall h see a ain li the children I bore to him, nor from his new bride shall he beget issu for sh must d a hideous death slain by my d es. Let no o e deem me a poor weak woman who sits w th folded hands, but of anoth r mould da. rous to foes and well-d posed to friends for they win the fairest fame who li e their l fe lik th

Ch S c thou hast imparted this design to me I bid thee hold th hand both from a wish to serve thee and because I would uphold the laws man make

M d. It cannot but be so thy words I pardon ... thou art not in th same so ry pli ht that I am.

Ch. O lady wilt thou teel th self to slay thy children twain?

M d I will, for that will stab my husband t the heart.

Ch. It may but thou wilt be the saddest wife a...

M d No matter wasted is every word that comes 'twixt now and then. (*Exit* ...) Ho! thou, go call me Jason hither fo thee I do emp oy on every mission of trust. No word di ul of all m purpose as thou art to thy mistress loyal and li ewise of my sex.

Exeunt ... *and* ...

Ch. Sons of E echtheus, heroes happ from of ore children f th blessed gods, fed on w sdom glorious food n hol land n pola ed b its foes, e who mo w th pri htl t p th ou h a ma e ev bright and lear wh r as legend t lls, t... M ses ni Pi ria bo, maids, w re b ou ht t birth b Harmonia with th golden hair and poet how C pri draw ng wat from the st eams of fai flow g Ceph ssu b eathes er the land g ...e b eez f balm w nds, and er as she crowns her tresses th ...gra land f sweet rose bud send f h th Lo es t sit b wisdom s sid to take a part in e ry ex ... (*Re-enter* ...) How then shall th cit of sa ed treams, th land that w l omes those t loves recei hee th mu deress f th hildren thee whose p esen e w th thers is po ...ion Thi k on th murder f thy children, consid r the blood deed th takest on thee Nay b th knees w ... nd a... fore thee sa not thy babes Wher hall hand r heart find hardihood ... such fearsome deed upon th sons How w l tho look pon thy babes, and till thou ... tai th blood p pose Thou ... st not when they fal t th feet f m ... cel th heart and dip in th ir blood thy hand

Enter ... *son*

Ja I am come at th biddin for e en though thy hate for me is b tter thou shalt not fail in th small boon but I will hear what new request thou hast to make of me lad

Me Jason I cra e thy pardon for the words I spoke and well thou mayest brook my burst of passion f r ere now we tw n ha e shared much lo... For I ha e reasoned w th my soul and railed upon me thus, Ah! poor heart! wh art I thus d s- trau ht wh so ngered ga ...st all good ad ice why have I come to hate the rulers of the land my husband too, who does the best for me he can in wedding with a pri cess and rearin for my ch ldren noble broth r Shall I not cease to fret? What pos- sesses m when hea en its best doth offer? Ha e I not my children to consider? do I fo g t that we are fugiti es, n need of fr end " When I had tho ht all this I saw how foolish I had been how senselessly enra ed So now I do commend thee and th k thee most wise in formin this connexion for u but I was mad I who should ha e shared in these d... s, helped on thy plans, and lent my aid to brin about the match, onl too pleased to wait upon thy bride But what we are we are we women, e il I w ll not say wherefore thou shouldst not sink to our sorry l vel nor with our weapon meet our ch l dishness. I y eld and do conf ss that I was wron then but now ha e I come to a better mind Com hither my children, come lea the house step f rth and with m greet and bid farewell to your fath be recon- ciled from all past bitterness un o your friends, as now your m ther is For we ha e made a truce a.d anger is no more.

Enter the Children

Take his ri ht hand ah m ! m sad fate! when I refl ct s n w upon th hidden future O m chil dren, since there awa ts you even thu a lo ... lon life stret h forth th hand t take a fond f ew ll Ah me! how ew to tears am I how f l of fear! For now that I ha at last released me from my quarrel with our father I l t the tear-drops stream adown my tend r cheek.

Ch From my eyes too burst forth the co ous tear O ma no greater ill th n the present e er befall!

J Lady I praise thi conduct not that I blame what is pa t for t s but natural to th f male sex to ent th ir spleen again t a husband wh h traf fi ks n other marria es besides hi own B t thy heart is cha ...ed to w ... sch ... ces and thou a t de termined on the better course lat tho h it be this is a t ... l a woman f sober sense And fo ou my sons, hath our father p ...ded w th all good heed ... ure ref b God s grace for ye I trow shall w th you brothers ha e hereafter th foremost rank in this Cor nthian ealm. Onl grow p fo ad th rest our sire and whoso f the gods is kind to us is bri ... to pass. M y I see you reach man s full estat hi h er th heads of those I hate! B t thou, lad why w th fresh tears dost thou thin e elids wet tu rning away th wan cheek, with no w lcome for these m happy tidings?

Med 'Tis naught upon these children my thoughts were turned

Ja Then take heart for I will see that it is well with them

Med I will do so nor will I doubt thy word woman is a weak creature ever given to tears

Ja Why prithee unhappy one dost moan o er these children?

Med I gave them birth and when thou didst pray long life for them pity entered into my soul *to think that these things must be* But the reason of thy coming hither to speak with me is partly told the rest will I now mention Since it is the pleasure of the rulers of the land to banish me and well I know twere best for me to stand not in the way of thee or of the rulers by dwelling here enemy as I am thought unto their house forth from this land in exile am I going but these children that they may know thy fostering hand beg Creon to remit their banishment

Ja I doubt whether I can persuade him yet must I attempt it

Med At least do thou bid thy wife ask her sire this boon to remit the exile of the children from this land

Ja Yea that will I and her methinks I shall persuade since she is a woman like the rest

Med I too will aid thee in this task for by the children s hand I will send to her gifts that far surpass in beauty I well know aught that now is seen mon st men a robe of finest tissue and a chaplet of chased gold But one of my attendants must haste and bring the ornaments hither (*Maid goes*) Happy shall she be not once alone but ten thousandfold for in thee she wins the noblest soul to share her love and gets these gifts as well which on a day my father s sire the Sun god bestowed on his descendants (*Maid returns with casket*) My children take in your hands these wedding gifts and bear them as an offering to the royal maid the happy bride for verily the gifts she shall receive are not to be scorned

Ja But why so rashly rob thyself of these gifts? Dost think a royal palace wants for robes or gold? Keep them nor give them to another For well I know that if my lady hold me in esteem she will set my price above all wealth

Med Say not so tis said that gifts tempt even gods and o er men s minds gold holds more potent sway than countl ss words Fortune smiles upon thy bride and heaven now doth swell her triumph youth is hers and princely power yet to save my children from exile I would barter life not dross alone Children when ye are come to the rich palace pray your father s new bride my mistress with suppliant voice to save you from exile offering her these ornaments the while for it is most needful that she receive the gifts in her own hand Now go and linger not may ye succeed and to your mother bring back the glad tidings she *fain* would hear!

Exeunt JASON *with children*

Ch Gone gone is every hope I had that the children yet might live forth to their doom they now proceed The hapless bride will take ay take the golden crown that is to be her ruin with her o n hand will she lift and place upon her golden locks the garniture of death Its grace and sheen divine will tempt her to put on the robe and crown of gold and in that act will she deck herself to be a bride amid the dead Such is the snare whereinto she will fall such is the deadly doom that waits the hapless maid nor shall she from the curse escape And thou poor wretch who to thy sorrow art wedding a king s daughter little thinkest of the doom thou art bringing on thy children s life or of the cruel death that waits thy bride

Woe is thee! how art thou fallen from thy high estate!

Next do I bewail thy sorrows O mother hapless in thy children thou who wilt slay thy babes because thou hast a rival the babes thy husband hath deserted impiously to join him to another bride

Enter ATTENDANT *with children*

At Thy children lady are from exile freed and gladly did the royal bride accept thy gifts in her own hands and so thy children made their peace with her

Med Ah!

At Why art so disquieted in thy prosperous hour? Why turnest thou thy cheek away and hast no welcome for my glad news?

Med Ah me!

At *These groans but ill accord with the news I* bring

Med Ah me! once more I say

At Have I unwittingly announced some evil tidings? Have I erred in thinking my news was good?

Med *Thy news is as it is I blame thee not*

At Then why this downcast eye these floods of tears?

Med Old friend needs must I weep for the gods and I with fell intent devised these schemes

At Be of good cheer thou too of a *surety shalt* by thy sons yet be brought home again

Med Ere that shall I bring others to their home ah! woe is me!

At Thou art not the only mother from thy children reft Bear patiently thy troubles as a *mortal* must

Med I will obey go thou within the house and make the day s provision for the children (*Exit* ATTENDANT) O my babes my babes ye have still a city and a home where far from me and my *sad lot* you will live your lives reft of your mother for ever while I must to another land in banishment or ever I have had my joy of you or lived to see you happy or ever I have graced your marriage *couch* your bride your bridal bower or lifted high the wedding torch Ah me! a victim of my own self will So it was all in vain I reared you O my sons in vain did suffer racked with anguish enduring the cruel pangs of childbirth Fore Heaven I once had hope poor me! high hope of ye that you *would* nurse me in my age and deck my corpse with loving hands a boon we mortals covet but now is my

sweet fancy dead and gone, for I must lose you both and in bitterness and sorrow drag through life. And ye shall never with fond eyes see your mother more, for o'er your life there comes a change. Ah me! ah me! why do ye look at me so, my children? why smile that last sweet smile? Ah me! what am I to do? My heart gives way when I behold my children's laughing eyes. O, I cannot; farewell to all my former schemes; I will take the children from the land, the babes I bore. Why should I wound their sire by wounding them, and get me a twofold measure of sorrow? No, no, I will not do it. Farewell my schemes! And yet what am I coming to? Can I consent to let those foes of mine escape from punishment, and incur their mockery? I must face this deed. Out upon my craven heart! to think that I should even have let the soft words escape my soul. Into the house, children! (*Exeunt Children*.) And whoso feels he must not be present at my sacrifice, must see to it himself; I will not spoil my handiwork. Ah! ah! do not, my heart, O do not do this deed! Let the children go, unhappy one, spare the babes! For if they live, they will cheer thee in our exile there.[1] Nay, by the fiends of hell's abyss, never, never will I hand my children over to their foes to mock and flout. Die they must in any case, and since 'tis so, why I, the mother who bore them, will give the fatal blow. In any case their doom is fixed and there is no escape. Already the crown is on her head, the robe is round her, and she is dying, the royal bride; that do I know full well. But now since I have a piteous path to tread, and yet more piteous still the path I send my children on, fain would I say farewell to them. (*Re-enter Children*.) O my babes, my babes, let your mother kiss your hands. Ah! hands I love so well, O lips most dear to me! O noble form and features of my children, I wish ye joy, but in that other land, for here your father robs you of your home. O the sweet embrace, the soft young cheek, the fragrant breath! my children! Go, leave me; I cannot bear to longer look upon ye; my sorrow wins the day. (*Exeunt Children*.) At last I understand the awful deed I am to do; but passion, that cause of direst woes to mortal man, hath triumphed o'er my sober thoughts.

Ch. Oft ere now have I pursued subtler themes and have faced graver issues than woman's sex should seek to probe; but then e'en we aspire to culture, which dwells with us to teach us wisdom; I say not all; for small is the class amongst women—(one may be that thou find amid many)—that is not incapable of culture. And amongst mortals I do assert that they who are wholly without experience and have never had children far surpass in happiness those who are parents. The childless, because they have never proved whether children grow up to be a blessing or curse to men are removed from all share in many troubles; whilst those who have a sweet race of children growing up in their houses do wear away, as I perceive, their whole life through; first with the thought how they may train them up in virtue, next how they shall leave their sons the means to live; and after all this 'tis far from clear whether on good or bad children they bestow their toil. But one last crowning woe for every mortal man I now will name; suppose that they have found sufficient means to live, and seen their children grow to man's estate and walk in virtue's path, still if fortune so befall, comes Death and bears the children's bodies off to Hades. Can it be any profit to the gods to heap upon us mortal men beside our other woes this further grief for children lost, a grief surpassing all?

Med. Kind friends, long have I waited expectantly to know how things would at the palace chance. And lo! I see one of Jason's servants coming hither, whose hurried gasps for breath proclaim him the bearer of some fresh tidings. *Enter Messenger*.

Messenger. Fly, fly, Medea! who hast wrought an awful deed, transgressing every law; nor leave behind or sea-borne bark or car that scours the plain.

Med. Why, what hath chanced that calls for such a flight of mine?

Mes. The princess is dead, a moment gone, and Creon too, her sire, slain by those drugs of thine.

Med. Tidings most fair are thine! Henceforth shalt thou be ranked amongst my friends and benefactors.

Mes. Ha! What? Art sane? Art not distraught, lady, who hearest with joy the outrage *to our royal* house done, and art not at the horrid tale afraid?

Med. Somewhat have I, too, to say *in* answer to thy words. Be not so hasty, friend, but tell the manner of their death, for thou wouldst give me double joy, if so they perished miserably.

Mes. When the children twain whom thou didst bear came with their father and entered the palace of the bride, right glad were we thralls who had shared thy griefs, for instantly from ear to ear a rumour spread that thou and thy lord had made up your former quarrel. One kissed thy children's hands, another their golden hair, while I for very joy went with them in person to the women's chambers. Our mistress, whom now we do revere in thy room, cast a longing glance at Jason, ere she saw thy children twain; but then she veiled her eyes and turned her blanching cheek away, disgusted at their coming; but thy husband tried to check his young bride's angry humour with these words: "O be not angered 'gainst thy friends; cease from wrath and turn once more thy face this way, counting as friends whomso thy husband counts, and accept these gifts, and for my sake crave thy sire to remit these children's exile." Soon as she saw the ornaments, no longer she held out, but yielded to her lord in all; and [illegible] the father and his sons were far from the palace gone, she took the broidered robe and put it on, and set the golden crown about her tresses, arranging her hair at her bright mirror, with many a happy smile at her breathless counterfeit. Then rising from her seat she passed across the chamber, tripping lightly on her fair white foot, exulting in the gift, with many a glance at her uplifted ankle. When lo! a

[1] At Athens.

scene of awful horror did ensue In a moment she turned pale reeled backwards trembling in every limb and sinks upon a seat scarce soon enough to save herself from falling to the ground An aged dame one of her company thinking belike it was a fit from Pan or some god sent raised a cry of prayer *till from her mouth she saw the foam flakes issue* her eyeballs rolling in their sockets and all the blood her face desert then did she raise a loud scream far different from her former cry Forthwith one handmaid rushed to her father s house another to her new bridegroom to tell his bride s sad fate and the whole house echoed with their running to and fro By this time would a quick walker have made the turn in a course of six plethra and reached the goal when she with one awful shriek awoke poor sufferer from her speechless trance and oped her closed eyes for against her a twofold anguish was warring The chaplet of gold about her head was sending forth a *wondrous stream of ravening flame while the fine* raiment thy children s gift was preying on the hapless maiden s fair white flesh and she starts from her seat in a blaze and seeks to fly shaking her hair and head this way and that to cast the crown therefrom but the gold held firm to its fastenings and the flame as she shook her locks blazed forth the more with double fury Then to the earth she sinks by the cruel blow o ercome past all recognition now save to a father s eye for her eyes had lost their tranquil gaze her face no more its natural look preserved and from the crown of her head blood and fire in mingled stream ran down and from her bones *the flesh kept peeling off beneath the gnawing of* those secret drugs e en as when the pine tree weeps its tears of pitch a fearsome sight to see And all were afraid to touch the corpse for we were warned by what had chanced Anon came her hapless father unto the house all unwitting of her doom and stumbles o er the dead and loud he cried and folding his arms about her kissed her with words like these the while O my poor poor child which of the gods hath destroyed thee thus foully? Who is robbing me of thee old as I am and ripe for death? O my child alas! would I could die with thee! He ceased his sad lament and would have raised his *aged frame but found himself held fast by the fine* spun robe as ivy that clings to the branches of the bay and then ensued a fearful struggle He strove to rise but she still held him back and if ever he pulled with all his might from off his bones his aged flesh he tore At last he gave it up and breathed forth his soul in awful suffering for he could no longer master the pain So there they lie daughter and aged sire dead side by side a grievous sight that calls for tears And as for thee I leave thee out of my consideration for thyself must dis over a means to escape punishment Not now for the first time I think this human life a shadow yea and without shrinking I will say that they amongst men who pretend to wisdom and expend deep thought on words do incur a serious charge of folly for amongst mortals no man is happy wealth may pour in and make one luckier than another but none can happy be *Exit*

Ch This day the deity it seems will mass on Jason as he well deserves a heavy load of evils Woe is thee daughter of Creon! We pity thy sad fate gone as thou art to Hades halls as the price of thy *marriage with Jason*

Med My friends I am resolved upon the deed at once will I slay my children and then leave this land without delaying long enough to hand them over to some more savage hand to butcher Needs must they die in any case and since they must I will slay them—I the mother that bare them O heart of mine steel thyself! Why do I hesitate to do the awful deed that must be done? Come take the sword thou wretched hand of mine! Take it and advance to the post whence starts thy life of sorrow! Away with cowardice! Give not one thought to thy babes how dear they are or how thou art their *mother This one brief day forget thy children dear* and after that lament for though thou wilt slay them yet they were thy darlings still and I am a lady of sorrows *Exit*

Ch O earth O sun whose beam illumines all look look upon this lost woman ere she stretch forth her murderous hand upon her sons for blood for lo! these are scions of thy own golden seed and the blood of gods is in danger of being shed by man O light from Zeus proceeding stay her hold her hand forth from the house chase this fell bloody fiend by demons led Vainly wasted were the throes thy children cost thee vainly hast thou borne it seems *sweet babes O thou who hast left behind* thee that passage through the blue Symplegades, that strangers justly hate Ah! hapless one why doth fierce anger thy soul assail? Why in its place is fell murder growing up? For grievous unto mortal men are pollutions that come of kindred blood poured on the earth woes to suit each crime hurled from heaven on the murderer s house

1st Son (Within) Ah me what can I do? Whither fly to escape my mother s blows?

2nd Son (Within) I know not sweet brother mine we are undone

Ch Didst hear didst hear the children s cry? O *lady born to sorrow* victim of an evil fate! Shall I enter the house? For the children s sake I am resolved to ward off the murder

1st Son (Within) Yea by heaven I adjure you help your aid is needed

2nd Son (Within) Even now the toils of the sword are closing round us

Ch O hapless mother surely thou hast a heart of stone or steel to slay the offspring of thy womb by such a murderous doom Of all the wives of yore I know but one who laid her hand upon her children dear even Ino whom the gods did madden in the day that the wife of Zeus drove her wandering from her home But she poor sufferer flung herself into the sea because of the foul murder of her children leaping o er the wave beat cliff and in her death was she united to her children twain Can there be

an deed of horror left to follow this? Woe for the wom of women fraught with disaster! What sorrows hast thou caused for men ere now!

Enter JASON

Ja. Ladies, stationed near this house pray tell me is the author of these hideous deeds, Medea, still within, or hath she fled from hence? For she must hide beneath the earth or soar on wings towards heaven's vault, if she would avoid the vengeance of the royal house. Is she so sure she will escape herself unpunished from this house, when she hath slain the rulers of the land? But enough of this! I am forgetting her children. As for her, those whom she hath wronged will do the like by her; but I am come to save the children's life, lest the victim's kin visit their wrath on me, in vengeance for the murder foul, wrought by my children's mother.

Ch. Unhappy man, thou knowest not the full extent of thy misery, else had thou never said those words.

Ja. How now? Can she want to kill me too?

Ch. Thy sons are dead; slain by their own mother's hand.

Ja. O God! what sayest thou? Woman, thou hast sealed my doom.

Ch. Thy children are no more; be sure of this.

Ja. Where slew she them; within the palace or outside?

Ch. Throw wide the doors and see thy children's murdered corpses.

Ja. Haste, ye slaves, loose the bolts, undo the fastenings, that I may see the sight of twofold woe, my murdered sons and her, whose blood in vengeance I will shed.

MEDEA *appears above the house, on a chariot drawn by dragons; the children's corpses beside her*

Med. Why shake those doors and attempt to loose their bolts, in quest of the dead and me their murderess? From such toil desist. If thou wouldst aught with me, say on, if so thou wilt; but never shalt thou lay hand on me, so swift the steeds the sun my father's sire, to me doth give to save me from the hand of my foes.

Ja. Accursed woman! by gods, by me and all mankind abhorred as never woman was, who hadst the heart to stab thy babes, thou their mother, leaving me undone and childless; this hast thou done and still dost gaze upon the sun and earth after this deed most impious. Curses on thee! I now perceive what then I missed in the day I brought thee, fraught with doom, from thy home in a barbarian land to dwell in Hellas, traitress to thy sire and to the land that nurtured thee. On me the gods have hurled the curse that dogged thy steps, for thou didst slay thy brother at his hearth ere thou cam'st aboard our fair ship Argo. Such was the outset of thy life of crime; then didst thou wed with me, and having borne me sons to glut thy passion's lust, thou now hast slain them. Not one amongst the wives of Hellas e'er had dared this deed; yet before them all I chose thee for my wife, wedding a foe to be my doom, no woman, but a lioness fiercer than Tyrrhene Scylla in nature. But with reproaches heaped a thousandfold I cannot wound thee, so brazen is thy nature. Perish, vile sorceress, murderess of thy babes! Whilst I must mourn my luckless fate, for I shall never enjoy my new-found bride, nor shall I have the children, whom I bred and reared, alive to say the last farewell to me; nay, I have lost them.

Med. To this thy speech I could have made a long retort, but Father Zeus knows well all I have done for thee, and the treatment thou hast given me. Yet thou wert not ordained to scorn my love and lead a life of joy in mockery of me, nor was thy royal bride nor Creon, who gave thee a second wife, to thrust me from this land and rue it not. Wherefore, if thou wilt, call me e'en a lioness, and Scylla whose home is in the Tyrrhene land; for I in turn have wrung thy heart, as well I might.

Ja. Thou, too, art grieved thyself, and sharest in my sorrow.

Med. Be well assured I am; but it relieves my pain to know thou canst not mock at me.

Ja. O my children, how vile a mother ye have found!

Med. My sons, your father's feeble lust has been your ruin!

Ja. 'Twas not my hand, at any rate, that slew them.

Med. No, but thy foul treatment of me, and thy new marriage.

Ja. Didst think that marriage cause enough to murder them?

Med. Dost think a woman counts this a trifling injury?

Ja. So she be self-restrained; but in thy eyes all is evil.

Med. Thy sons are dead and gone. That will stab thy heart.

Ja. They live, methinks, to bring a curse upon thy head.

Med. The gods know, whoso of them began this troublous coil.

Ja. Indeed, they know that hateful heart of thine.

Med. Thou art as hateful. I am aweary of thy bitter tongue.

Ja. And I likewise of thine. But parting is easy.

Med. Say how; what am I to do? for I am fain as thou to go.

Ja. Give up to me those dead, to bury and lament.

Med. No, never! I will bury them myself, bearing them to Hera's sacred field, who watches o'er the Cape, that none of their foes may insult them by pulling down their tombs; and in this land of Sisyphus I will ordain hereafter a solemn feast and mystic rites to atone for this impious murder. Myself will now to the land of Erechtheus, to dwell with Aegeus, Pandion's son. But thou, as well thou mayest, shalt die a caitiff's death, thy head crushed beneath a shattered relic of Argo, when thou hast seen the bitter ending of my marriage.

Ja. The curse of our sons' avenging spirit and of Justice, that calls for blood, be on thee!

Med What god or power divine hears thee breaker of oaths and every law of hospitality?

Ja Fie upon thee! cursed witch! child murderess!

Med To thy house! go bury thy wife

Ja I go bereft of both my sons

Med Thy grief is yet to come wait till old age is with thee too

Ja O my dear dear children!

Med Dear to their mother not to thee

Ja And yet thou didst slay them?

Med Yea to vex thy heart

Ja One last fond kiss ah me! I fain would on their lips imprint

Med Embraces now and fond farewells for them but then a cold repulse!

Ja By heaven I do adjure thee let me touch their tender skin

Med No no! in vain this word has sped its flight

Ja O Zeus dost hear how I am driven hence dost mark the treatment I receive from this she lion fell murderess of her young? Yet so far as I may and can I raise for them a dirge and do adjure the gods to witness how thou hast slain my sons and wilt not suffer me to embrace or bury their dead bodies Would I had never begotten them to see thee slay them after all!

Ch Many a fate doth Zeus dispense high on his Olympian throne oft do the gods bring things to pass beyond man s expectation that which we thought would be is not fulfilled while for the un looked for god finds out a way and such hath been the issue of this matter

Exeunt OMNES

HIPPOLYTUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

APHRODITE	PHAEDRA
HIPPOLYTUS	THESEUS
ATTE D NTS OF HI POLYTUS	F RST MESSENGER
CHORUS OF TROEZENIAN WOMEN	S COND MESSENGER
N RSE OF PHAEDRA	ARTEMIS

Before the pal ce of Pittheus at Troezen Enter PH ODITE

Aphrodit Wid o er man my realm extends, and proud th name that I the goddess Cyp is, bear both in hea en s cou ts and mongst all those who dw ll n h r th limits of the sea and the bounds of Atlas, beholdin th son god s light those that re spect my power I a f n e to h no r but bring to un all who aunt th msel es t m For eve in the race of god this feeling fi ds a h me even pleasure t th h nour men pay th m And the truth of this I soon ul show f r that son f Theseus, born of the Amazo , H ppoly tu whom holy Pitth u taught alone of all the d ell rs i th s land f Troezen calls m dest of th d ities. Love h scor s, and as for marriage ill on of it but Art mis, daughter of Zeus, s ter f Phœbu he doth honour ounting h r th hief of goddesses nd e er through the g en ood attenda t on his virgin goddess, h clears th ea th f wild beasts w th his fleet hounds, enjoy ing th comradeship of o e too high f r m tal ken. 'Tis ot this I grudg him ol why hould I? But f r b s n in r n y n ll ch t ry day t ke engea on H ppoly tus f long ago I cleared the g und f ma b tacles so r need but tr fling toil, Fo s he me on day f m the h me of P t th to w tness the sol mn my ti ries and be ni tiated th n Pand on land Phædra his fa th n bl w fe cau ht s ht f h m a d by my deng s she f und h heart was se zed w th nd d ar s d h came to this Troezenian calm a t mp did sh ear to Cypris hard by the ock of P us sh r e look this ou try for lo e of th uth in oth r land d to win h s lo e in d r me h called fter his name the t mple h had f u ded for the goddess. N w when The se ft th land of Cec ps fl the poll ti n of th blood f P llas' sons, nd th hi w f sailed to this h e, re t to suff r ail f a yea the be ga th r t hed wife t pine way n sile e moan g rath lo e u l sco ng d non f h servants kn w hat ails her But thi passion f hers must not fa l thus No I will discover the matter to Theseus and all shall be la d bare Then will the father slay his child my b tter foe by curses, for the lord Pose d n granted this boon to Theseus three wi hes of the god to ask nor e er a k in vain So Phædra is to die an honoured death t s true but still to d e for I will ot let her suffering outweigh the payment of uch fo feit by my foes a shall sat isfy my honour But lo! I see the son of Theseus coming h ther—H ppoly tus fresh from the labours of the chase I will g t me hence At h s back follows a lo g tra n of reta ners in j yous cries of revelry uniting and hymns of pra se to Artemis his goddess for little he recks that Death hath oped his gates for him, nd that this is h s la t look upon the l ght

Enter H POLYTU *and* ATTENDANT

H ppoly tus Come f u w friends, sing ng to Ar tem s, dau hter of Zeus, throned in the sky whose votaries we are

Attendant Lady goddess awful queen, daughter of Zeus ll ha l! hail! chil of Latona and of Zeus, peer less mid the irg n cho r who hast thy dwell ng in h a en s w de m n io s at thy noble father s court in the g lden house of Zeus

Hi All hail! most beauteous Art m lovel r far than all the daught rs of Olympus! F r thee, O m s tress m I bring this w ven wreath culled from irgi meadow where no shepherd dares to herd h s flock or e er scythe hath mown but o er the mead un h n the bee doth wing its way in spring and w th th dew fr m rivers drawn purity that g d n nds. Such as know no cun ng lore, y t in who e nature elf ontrol made perf ct hath a home these may pl ck the fl wers, b t not the wi ked world Acc pt I pray dear mistre m e thi ha l t from my holy hand to c own thy locks f g ld f I and none oth r of mortals, have this high gu rd n to be with thee with thee con erse hearing th o e th ugh not thy fa e beh ld ng So be it mine to e d my lif a I beg n

At My p ncel wen eds muste llupon th gods,our lo ds, so wilt thou list n to a fri ndly word f om me?

H Why that will I el ne re I pro ed a fool

At Dost know th n th way of the world?

H Not I but wh refore such a question?

At It hates reserve which careth not for all men s lo e.

[1] h Euxine.
[2] A tica
[3] Desc ndants of Pandion ki g of Cecropia, lain by Theseus to btain he kingd m.

Hi And rightly too reserve in man is ever galling

At But there s a charm in courteous affability?

Hi The greatest surely aye and profit too at trifling cost

At Dost think the same law holds in heaven as well?

Hi I trow it doth since all our laws we men from heaven draw

At Why then dost thou neglect to greet an august goddess?

Hi Whom speak st thou of? Keep watch upon thy tongue lest it some mischief cause

At *Cypris I mean whose image is stationed o er thy gate*

Hi I greet her from afar preserving still my chastity

At Yet is she an august goddess far renowned on earth

Hi Mongst gods as well as men we have our several preferences

At I wish thee luck and wisdom too so far as thou dost need it

Hi No god whose worship craves the night hath charms for me

At My son we should avail us of the gifts that gods confer

Hi Go in my faithful followers and make ready food within the house a well filled board hath charm after the chase is o er Rub down my steeds ye must that when I have had my fill I may yoke them to the chariot and give them proper exercise As for thy Queen of Love a long farewell to her

Exit HIPPOLYTUS

At Meantime I with sober mind for I must not copy my young master do offer up my prayer to thy image lady Cypris in such words as it becomes a slave to use But thou should st pardon all who in youth s impetuous heat speak idle words of thee make as though thou hearest not for gods must needs be wiser than the sons of men *Exit*

Enter CHORUS OF TRŒZENIAN WOMEN

Chorus A rock there is where as they say the ocean dew distils and from its beetling brow it pours a copious stream for pitchers to be dipped therein twas here I had a friend washing robes of purple in the trickling stream and she was spreading them out on the face of a warm sunny rock from her I had the tidings first of all that my mistress was wasting on the bed of sickness pent within her house a thin veil o ershadowing her head of golden hair And this is the third day I hear that she hath closed her lovely lips and denied her chaste body all sustenance eager to hide her suffering and reach death s cheerless bourn Maiden thou must be possessed by Pan made frantic or by Hecate or by the Corybantes dread and Cybele the mountain mother Or maybe thou hast sinned against Dictynna huntress queen and art wasting for thy guilt in sacrifice unoffered For she doth range o er lakes expanse and past the bounds of earth upon the ocean s tossing billows Or doth some rival in thy house beguile thy lord the captain of Erechtheus sons that hero nobly born to secret amours hid from thee? Or hath some mariner sailing hither from Crete reached this port that sailors love with evil tidings for our queen and she with sorrow for her grievous fate is to her bed confined? Yea and oft o er woman s wayward nature settles a feeling of miserable perplexity arising from labour pains or passionate desire I too have felt at times this sharp thrill shoot through me but I would cry to Artemis queen of archery who comes from heaven to aid us in our travail and thanks to heaven s grace she ever comes at my call with welcome help Look! where the aged nurse is *bringing her forth from the house before the door* while on her brow the cloud of gloom is deepening My soul longs to learn what is her grief the canker that is wasting our queen s fading charms

Enter PHAEDRA *and* NURSE

Nurse O the ills of mortal men! the cruel diseases they endure! What can I do for thee? from what refrain? Here is the bright sun light here the azure sky lo! we have brought thee on thy bed of sickness without the palace for all thy talk was of coming hither but soon back to thy chamber wilt thou hurry Disappointment follows fast with thee thou hast no joy in aught for long the present has no power to please on something absent next thy heart is set Better be sick than tend the sick the first is but a single ill the last unites mental grief *with manual toil Man s whole life is full of anguish* no respite from his woes he finds but if there is aught to love beyond this life night s dark pall doth wrap it round And so we show our mad love of this life because its light is shed on earth and because we know no other and have naught revealed to us of all our earth may hide and trusting to fables we drift at random

Phædra Lift my body raise my head! My limbs are all unstrung kind friends O handmaids lift my arms my shapely arms The tire on my head is too heavy for me to wear away with *it and let my* tresses o er my shoulders fall

Nu Be of good heart dear child toss not so wildly to and fro Lie still be brave so wilt thou find thy sickness easier to bear suffering for mortals is nature s iron law

Ph Ah! would I could draw a draught of water pure from some dew fed spring and lay me down to rest in the grassy meadow neath the poplar s shade!

Nu My child what wild speech is this? O say not such things in public wild whirling words of frenzy bred!

Ph Away to the mountain take me! to the wood to the pine trees I will go where hounds pursue the prey hard on the scent of dappled fawns Ye gods! what joy to hark them on to grasp the barbed dart to poise Thessalian hunting spears close to my golden hair then let them fly

Nu Why why my child these anxious cares? What hast thou to do with the chase? Why so eager for the flowing spring when hard by these towers stands a hill well watered whence thou may st freely draw?

Ph. O Artemis, who watchest o'er sea-beat Limna[1] and the race-course thundering to the horse's hoofs, would I were upon thy plains curbing Venetian steeds!

Nu. Why betray thy frenzy in these wild whirling words? Now thou wert for hasting hence to the hills away to hunt wild beasts, and now thy yearning is to drive the steed over the waveless sands. This needs a cunning seer to say what god it is that reins thee from the course, distracting thy senses, child.

Ph. Ah me! alas! what have I done? Whither have I strayed, my senses leaving me? Mad, mad, stricken by some demon's curse! Woe is me! Cover my head again, nurse. Shame fills me for the words I have spoken. Hide me then; from my eyes the tear-drops stream, and for very shame I turn them away. 'Tis painful coming to one's senses again, and madness, evil though it be, has this advantage, that one has no knowledge of reason's overthrow.

Nu. There then I cover thee; but when will death hide my body in the grave? Many a lesson length of days is teaching me. Yea, mortal men should pledge themselves to moderate friendships only, not to such as reach the very heart's core; affection's ties should be light upon them to let them slip or draw them tight. For one poor heart to grieve for twain, as I do for my mistress, is a burden sore to bear. Men say that too engrossing pursuits in life more oft cause disappointment than pleasure, and too oft are foes to health. Wherefore I do not praise excess so much as moderation, and with me wise men will agree.

Ch. O aged dame, faithful nurse of Phaedra, our queen, we see her sorry plight; but what it is that ails her we cannot discern, so fain would learn of thee and hear thy opinion.

Nu. I question her, but am no wiser, for she will not answer.

Ch. Nor tell what source these sorrows have?

Nu. The same answer thou must take, for she is dumb on every point.

Ch. How weak and wasted is her body!

Nu. What marvel? 'tis three days now since she has tasted food.

Ch. Is this infatuation, or an attempt to die?

Nu. 'Tis death she courts; such fasting aims at ending life.

Ch. A strange story! is her husband satisfied?

Nu. She hides from him her sorrow, and vows she is not ill.

Ch. Can he not guess it from her face?

Nu. He is not now in his own country.

Ch. But dost thou insist in thy endeavour to find out her complaint, her crazy mind?

Nu. I have tried every plan, and all in vain; yet not even now will I relax my zeal, that thou too, if thou art here, mayst witness my devotion to my unhappy mistress. Come, come, my darling child, let us forget, the twain of us, our former words; be thou more mild, smoothing that sullen brow and changing the current of thy thought, and I, if in aught before I failed in humouring thee, will let that be and find some better course. If thou art sick with ills thou canst not name, there be women here to help to set thee right; but if thy trouble can to men's ears be divulged, speak, that physicians may pronounce on it. Come, then, why so dumb? Thou shouldst not so remain, my child, but scold me if I speak amiss, or, if I give good counsel, yield assent. One word, one look this way! Ah me! Friends, we waste our toil to no purpose; we are as far away as ever; she would not relent to my arguments then, nor is she yielding now. Well, grow more stubborn than the sea, yet be assured of this, that if thou diest thou art a traitress to thy children, for they will never inherit their father's halls, nay, by that knightly queen the Amazon who bore a son to lord it over them, a bastard born but not a bastard bred, whom well thou knowest, e'en Hippolytus.

Ph. Oh! oh!

Nu. Ha! doth that touch the quick?

Ph. Thou hast undone me, nurse; I do adjure by the gods, mention that man no more.

Nu. There now! thou art thyself again, but e'en yet refusest to aid thy children and preserve thy life.

Ph. My babes I love, but there is another storm that buffets me.

Nu. Daughter, are thy hands from bloodshed pure?

Ph. My hands are pure, but on my soul there rests a stain.

Nu. The issue of some enemy's secret witchery?

Ph. A friend is my destroyer, one unwilling as myself.

Nu. Hath Theseus wronged thee in any wise?

Ph. Never may I prove untrue to him!

Nu. Then what strange mystery is there that drives thee on to die?

Ph. O let my sin and me alone! 'tis not 'gainst thee I sin.

Nu. Never willingly! and, if I fail, 'twill rest at thy door.

Ph. How now? thou usest force in clinging to my hand.

Nu. Yea, and I will never loose my hold upon thy knees.

Ph. Alas for thee! my sorrows, shouldst thou learn them, would recoil on thee.

Nu. What keener grief for me than failing to win thee?

Ph. 'Twill be death to thee; though to me that brings renown.

Nu. And dost thou then conceal this boon despite my prayers?

Ph. I do, for 'tis out of shame I am planning an honourable escape.

Nu. Tell it, and thine honour shall the brighter shine.

Ph. Away, I do conjure thee; loose my hand.

Nu. I will not, for the boon thou shouldst have granted me is denied.

[1] A sea-coast town of Troezen.

Ph I will grant it out of reverence for thy holy suppliant touch

Nu Henceforth I hold my peace 'tis thine to speak from now

Ph Ah! hapless mother[1] what a love was thine!

Nu Her love for the bull? daughter or what meanest thou?

Ph And woe to thee! my sister[2] bride of Dionysus

Nu What ails thee child? speaking ill of kith and kin

Ph Myself the third to suffer! how am I undone!

Nu Thou strik'st me dumb! Where will this history end?

Ph That love has been our curse from time long past

Nu I know no more of what I fain would learn

Ph Ah! would thou couldst say for me what I have to tell.

Nu I am no prophetess to unriddle secrets

Ph What is it they mean when they talk of people being in love?

Nu At once the sweetest and the bitterest thing my child

Ph I shall only find the latter half

Nu Ha! my child art thou in love?

Ph The Amazon's son whoever he may be—

Nu Mean'st thou Hippolytus?

Ph 'Twas thou not I that spoke his name

Nu O heavens! what is this my child? Thou hast ruined me Outrageous! friends I will not live and bear it hateful is life hateful to mine eyes the light. This body I resign will cast it off and rid me of existence by my death Farewell my life is o'er Yea for the chaste have wicked passions 'gainst their will maybe but still they have Cypris it seems is not a goddess after all but something greater far for she hath been the ruin of my lady and of me and our whole family

Ch O too clearly didst thou hear our queen uplift her voice to tell her startling tale of piteous suffering Come death ere I reach thy state of feeling[3] loved mistress O horrible! woe for these miseries! woe for the sorrows on which mortals feed! Thou art undone! thou hast disclosed thy sin to heaven's light What hath each passing day and every hour in store for thee? Some strange event will come to pass in this house For it is no longer uncertain where the star of thy love is setting thou hapless daughter of Crete

Ph Ladies of Trœzen who dwell here upon the frontier edge of Pelops' land oft ere now in heedless mood through the long hours of night have I wondered why man's life is spoiled and it seems to me their evil case is not due to any natural fault of judgment for there be many dowered with sense but we must view the matter in this light by teaching and experience we learn the right but neglect it in practice some from sloth others from preferring pleasure of some kind or other to duty Now life has many pleasures protracted talk and leisure that seductive evil likewise there is shame which is of two kinds one a noble quality the other a curse to families but if for each its proper time were clearly known these twain could not have had the selfsame letters to denote them So then since I had made up my mind on these points 'twas not likely any drug would alter it and make me think the contrary And I will tell thee too the way my judgment went. When love wounded me I bethought me how I best might bear the smart So from that day forth I began to hide in silence what I suffered For I put no faith in counsellors who know well to lecture others for presumption yet themselves have countless troubles of their own Next I did devise noble endurance of these wanton thoughts striving by continence for victory And last when I could not succeed in mastering love hereby methought it best to die and none can gainsay my purpose For fain I would my virtue should to all appear my shame have few to witness it I knew my sickly passion now to yield to it I saw how infamous and more I learnt to know so well that I was but a woman a thing the world detests Curses hideous curses on that wife who first did shame her marriage vow for lovers other than her lord! 'Twas from noble families this curse began to spread among our sex For when the noble countenance disgrace poor folk of course will think that it is right Those too I hate who make profession of purity though in secret reckless sinners How can these queen Cypris ocean's child e'er look their husbands in the face? do they never feel one guilty thrill that their accomplice night or the chambers of their house will find a voice and speak? This it is that calls on me to die kind friends that so I may ne'er be found to have disgraced my lord or the children I have born no! may they grow up and dwell in glorious Athens free to speak and act heirs to such fair fame as a mother can bequeath For to know that father or mother have sinned doth turn the stoutest heart to slavishness This alone men say can stand the buffets of life's battle a just and virtuous soul in whomsoever found For time unmasks the villain sooner or later holding up to them a mirror as to some blooming maid 'Mongst such may I be never seen!

Ch Now look! how fair is chastity however viewed whose fruit is good repute amongst men

Nu My queen 'tis true thy tale of woe but lately told did for the moment strike me with wild alarm but now I do reflect upon my foolishness second thoughts are often best even with men Thy fate is no uncommon one nor past one's calculations thou art stricken by the passion Cypris sends Thou art in love what wonder? so are many more Wilt thou because thou lov'st destroy thyself? 'Tis little gain I trow for those who love or yet may love their fellows if death must be their end for though the Love Queen's onset in her might is more than man can bear yet doth she gently visit yielding hearts

[1] Pasiphae wife of Minos deceived by Aphrodite into a fatal passion for a bull Cf Virgil *Æneid* v

[2] Ariadne

[3] Or before thou accomplish thy purpose.

and only when she finds a proud unnatural spirit doth she take and mock it past belief. Her path is in the sky, and mid the ocean's surge she rides; from her all nature springs; she sows the seeds of love, inspires the warm desire to which we sons of earth all owe our being. They who have aught to do with books of ancient scribes, or themselves engage in studious pursuits, know how Zeus of Semele was enamoured, how the bright-eyed goddess of the Dawn once stole Cephalus to dwell in heaven for the love she bore him; yet these in heaven abide nor shun the gods' approach, content, I trow, to yield to their misfortune. Wilt thou refuse to yield? thy sire, it seems, should have begotten thee on special terms or with different gods for masters, if in these laws thou wilt not acquiesce. How many, prithee, men of sterling sense, when they see their wives unfaithful, make as though they saw it not? How many fathers, when their sons have gone astray, assist them in their amours? 'tis part of human wisdom to conceal the deed of shame. Nor should man aim at excessive refinement in his life; for they cannot with exactness finish e'en the roof that covers in a house; and how dost thou, after falling into so deep a pit, think to escape? Nay, if thou hast more of good than bad, thou wilt fare exceeding well, thou human creature. O cease, my darling child, from evil thoughts, let wanton pride be gone, for this is naught else, this wish to rival gods in perfectness. Face thy love; 'tis heaven's will thou shouldst. Sick thou art, yet turn thy sickness to some happy issue. For there are charms and spells to soothe the soul; surely some cure for thy disease will be found. Men, no doubt, might seek it long and late if our women's minds no scheme devise.

Ch. Although the guess thee at thy present need the wiser counsel, Phaedra, yet do I praise thee. Still my praise may sound more harsh and jar more cruelly on thy ear than her advice.

Ph. 'Tis even this, too plausible a tongue, that overthrows good governments and homes of men. We should not speak to please the ear but point the path that leads to noble fame.

Nu. What means this solemn speech? No need of rounded phrases, but at once must we sound the prince, telling him frankly how it is with thee. Had not thy life to such a crisis come, or wert thou with self-control endowed, ne'er would I to gratify thy passions have urged thee to this course; but now 'tis a struggle fierce to save thy life, and therefore less to blame.

Ph. Accursed proposal! peace, woman! never utter those shameful words again!

Nu. Shameful, maybe, yet for thee better than honour's code. Better this deed, if it shall save thy life, than that name thy pride will kill thee to retain.

Ph. I conjure thee, go no further, for thy words are plausible but infamous; for though as yet love has not undermined my soul, yet, if in specious words thou dress thy foul suggestion, I shall be beguiled into the snare from which I am now escaping.

Nu. If thou art of this mind, 'twere well thou ne'er hadst sinned; but as it is, hear me; for that is the next best course; I in my house have charms to soothe thy love,—'twas but now I thought of them;—these shall cure thee of thy sickness on no disgraceful terms, thy mind unhurt, if thou wilt be but brave. But from him thou lovest we must get some token, a word or fragment of his robe, and thereby unite in one love's twofold stream.

Ph. Is thy drug a salve or potion?

Nu. I cannot tell; be content, my child, to profit by it and ask no questions.

Ph. I fear me thou wilt prove too wise for me.

Nu. If thou fear this, confess thyself afraid of all; but why thy terror?

Ph. Lest thou shouldst breathe a word of this to Theseus' son.

Nu. Peace, my child! I will do all things well; only be thou, queen Cypris, ocean's child, my partner in the work! And for the rest of my purpose, it will be enough for me to tell it to our friends within the house. *Exit* NURSE.

Ch. O Love, Love, that from the eyes diffusest soft desire, bringing on the souls of those whom thou dost camp against sweet grace, O never in evil mood appear to me, nor out of time and tune approach! Nor fire nor meteor hurls a mightier bolt than Aphrodite's shaft shot by the hand of Love, the child of Zeus. Idly, idly by the streams of Alpheus and in the Pythian shrines of Phoebus, Hellas heaps the slaughtered steers; while Love we worship not, Love, the king of men, who holds the key to Aphrodite's sweetest bower,—worship not him who, when he comes, lays waste and marks his path to mortal hearts by wide-spread woe. There was that maiden[1] in Oechalia, a girl unwed, that knew no wooer yet nor married joys; her did the queen of Love snatch from her home across the sea and gave unto Alcmena's son, mid blood and smoke and murderous marriage-hymns, to be to him a frantic fiend of hell; woe! woe for his wooing!

Ah! holy walls of Thebes, ah! fount of Dirce, ye could testify what course the Love-Queen follows. For with the blazing levin-bolt did she cut short the fatal marriage of Semele, mother of Zeus-born Bacchus. All things she doth inspire, dread goddess, winging her flight hither and thither like a bee.

Ph. Peace, ladies, peace! I am undone.

Ch. What, Phaedra, is this dread event within thy house?

Ph. Hush! let me hear what those within are saying.

Ch. I am silent; this is surely the prelude to mischief.

Ph. Great gods! how awful are my sufferings!

Ch. What a cry was there! what loud alarm! say what sudden terror, lady, doth thy soul dismay.

Ph. I am undone. Stand here at the door and hear the noise arising in the house.

Ch. Thou art already by the bolted door; 'tis for thee to note the sounds that issue from within. And tell me, O tell me what mischief can be on foot.

[1] Iole, daughter of Eurytus, king of Oechalia.

Ph 'Tis the son of the horse loving Amazon who calls Hippolytus uttering foul curses on my servant

Ch I hear a noise but cannot clearly tell which way it comes Ah! 'tis through the door the sound reached thee

Ph Yes yes he is calling her plainly enough a go between in vice traitress to her master's honour

Ch Woe woe is me! thou art betrayed dear mistress! What counsel shall I give thee? thy secret is out thou art utterly undone

Ph Ah me! ah me!

Ch Betrayed by friends!

Ph She hath ruined me by speaking of my misfortune 'twas kindly meant but an ill way to cure my malady

Ch O what wilt thou do now in thy cruel dilemma?

Ph I only know one way one cure for these my woes and that is instant death

Enter HIPPOLYTUS *and* NURSE

Hi O mother earth! O sun's unclouded orb! What words unfit for any lips have reached my ears!

Nu Peace my son lest some one hear thy outcry

Hi I cannot hear such awful words and hold my peace

Nu I do implore thee by thy fair right hand

Hi Let go my hand touch not my robe

Nu O by thy knees I pray destroy me not utterly

Hi Why say this if as thou pretendest thy lips are free from blame?

Nu My son this is no story to be noised abroad

Hi A virtuous tale grows fairer told to many

Nu Never dishonour thy oath thy son

Hi My tongue an oath did take but not my heart

Nu My son what wilt thou do? destroy thy friend ?

Hi Friends indeed! the wicked are no friends of mine

Nu O pardon me to err is only human child

Hi Great Zeus why didst thou to man's sorrow put woman evil counterfeit to dwell where shines the sun? If thou wert minded that the human race should multiply it was not from women they should have drawn their stock but in thy temples they should have paid gold or iron or ponderous bronze and bought a family each man proportioned to his offering and so in independence dwelt from women free But now as soon as ever we would bring this plague into our home we bring its fortune to the ground 'Tis clear from this how great a curse a woman is the very father that begot and nurtured her to rid him of the mischief gives her a dower and packs her off while the husband who takes the noxious weed into his home fondly decks his sorry idol in fine raiment and tricks her out in robes squandering by degrees unhappy wight! his house's wealth For he is in this dilemma say his marriage has brought him good connections he is glad then to keep the wife he loathes or if he gets a good wife but useless relations he tries to stifle the bad luck with the good But it is easiest for him who has settled in his house as wife a mere nobody incapable from simplicity I hate a clever woman never may she set foot in my house who aims at knowing more than women need for in these clever women Cypris implants a larger store of villainy while the artless woman is by her shallow wit from lewdness debarred No servant should ever have had access to a wife, but men should put to live with them beasts, which bite not talk in which case they could not speak to any one nor be answered back by them But as it is, the wicked in their chambers plot wickedness, and their servants carry it abroad Even thus vile wretch thou cam'st to make me partner in an outrage on my father's honour wherefore I must wash that stain away in running streams dashing the water into my ears How could I commit so foul a crime when by the very mention of it I feel myself polluted? Be well assured woman 'tis only my religious scruple saves thee For had not I unawares been caught by an oath 'fore heaven! I would not have refrained from telling all unto my father But now I will from the house away so long as Theseus is abroad and will maintain strict silence But when my father comes I will return and see how thou and thy mistress face him and so shall I learn by experience the extent of thy audacity Perdition seize you both! (*To the audience*) I can never satisfy my hate for women no! not even though some say this is ever my theme for of a truth they always are evil So either let some one prove them chaste or let me still trample on them forever *Exit*

Ch O the cruel unhappy fate of women! What arts what arguments have we once we have made a slip to loose by craft the tight-drawn knot?

Ph I have met my deserts O earth O light of day! How can I escape the stroke of fate? How my pangs conceal kind friends? What god will appear to help me what mortal to take my part or help me in unrighteousness? The present calamity of my life admits of no escape Most hapless I of all my sex!

Ch Alas alas! the deed is done thy servant's schemes have gone awry my queen and all is lost

Ph Accursed woman! traitress to thy friends! How hast thou ruined me! May Zeus, my ancestor smite thee with his fiery bolt and uproot thee from thy place Did I not foresee thy purpose did I not bid thee keep silence on the very matter which is now my shame? But thou wouldst not be still wherefore my fair name will not go with me to the tomb But now I must another scheme devise Yon youth in the keenness of his fury will tell his father of my sin and the aged Pittheus of my state and fill the world with stories to my shame Perdition seize thee and every meddling fool who by dishonest means would serve unwilling friends!

Nu Mistress thou mayst condemn the mischief I have done for sorrow's sting o'ermasters thy judgment yet can I answer thee in face of this, if thou wilt hear 'Twas I who nurtured thee I love thee still but in my search for medicine to cure thy sickness I found what least I sought Had I but suc

ceeded, I had been counted wise; for the credit we get for wisdom is measured by our success.

Ph. Is it just, is it any satisfaction to me that thou shouldst wound me first, then bandy words with me?

N. We dwell on this too long. I was not wise, I own; but there are yet ways of escape from the trouble, my child.

Ph. Be dumb henceforth; evil was thy first advice to me, evil too thy attempted scheme. Begone and leave me; look to thyself; I will my own fortunes for the best arrange. (*Exit Nurse.*) Ye noble daughters of Troezen, grant me the only boon I crave; in silence bury what ye here have heard.

Ch. By majestic Artemis, child of Zeus, I swear I will never divulge aught of thy sorrows.

Ph. 'Tis well. But I, with all my thought, can but one way discover out of this calamity, that so I may secure my children's honour, and find myself some help as matters stand. For never, never will I bring shame upon my Cretan home, nor will I, to save one poor life, face Theseus after my disgrace.

Ch. Art thou bent then on some cureless woe?

Ph. On death; the means thereto must I devise myself.

Ch. Hush!

Ph. Do thou at least advise me well. For this very day shall I gladden Cypris, my destroyer, by yielding up my life, and shall own myself vanquished by cruel love. Yet shall my dying be another's curse, that he may learn not to exult at my misfortunes; but when he comes to share the self-same plague with me, he will take a lesson in wisdom.

Exit PHAEDRA.

Ch. O to be nestling 'neath some pathless cavern, there by god's creating hand to grow into a bird amid the wingèd tribes! Away would I soar to Adria's wave-beat shore and to the waters of Eridanus, where a father's hapless daughters in their grief for Phaethon distil into the glooming flood the amber brilliance of their tears. And to the apple-bearing strand of those minstrels in the west I then would come, where ocean's lord no more to sailors grants a passage o'er the deep dark main, finding there the heaven's holy bound, upheld by Atlas, where water from ambrosial founts wells up beside the couch of Zeus inside his halls, and holy earth, the bounteous mother, causes joy to spring in heavenly breasts. O white-winged bark, that o'er the booming ocean-wave didst bring my royal mistress from her happy home, to crown her queen 'mongst sorrow's brides! Surely evil omens from either port, at least from Crete, were with that ship, what time to glorious Athens it sped its way, and the crew made fast its twisted cable-end upon the beach of Munychus, and on the land stept out. Whence comes it that her heart is crushed, cruelly afflicted by Aphrodite with unholy love; so she by bitter grief o'erwhelmed will tie a noose within her bridal bower to fit it to her fair white neck, too modest for this hateful lot in life, prizing o'er all her name and fame, and striving thus to rid her soul of passion's sting.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Help! ho! To the rescue all who near the palace stand! She hath hung herself, our queen, the wife of Theseus.

Ch. Woe worth the day! the deed is done; our royal mistress is no more, dead she hangs in the dangling noose.

Me. Haste! some one bring a two-edged knife wherewith to cut the knot about her neck!

Semi-Chorus I. Friends, what shall we do? think you we should enter the house, and loose the queen from the tight-drawn noose?

Semi-Chorus II. Why should we? Are there not young servants here? To do too much is not a safe course in life.

Me. Lay out the hapless corpse, straighten the limbs. This was a bitter way to sit at home and keep my master's house! *Exit* MESSENGER.

Ch. She is dead, poor lady, so I hear. Already are they laying out the corpse.

Enter THESEUS.

Theseus. Ladies, can ye tell me what the uproar in the palace means? There came the sound of servants weeping bitterly to mine ear. None of my household deign to open wide the gates and give me glad welcome as a traveller from prophetic shrines. Hath aught befallen old Pittheus? No. Though he be well advanced in years, yet should I mourn, were he to quit this house.

Ch. 'Tis not against the old, Theseus, that fate, to strike thee, aims this blow; prepare thy sorrow for a younger corpse.

Th. Woe is me! is it a child's life death robs me of?

Ch. They live; but, cruellest news of all for thee, their mother is no more.

Th. What! my wife dead? By what cruel mischance?

Ch. About her neck she tied the hangman's knot.

Th. Had grief so chilled her blood? or what had befallen her?

Ch. I know but this, for I am myself but now arrived at the house to mourn thy sorrows, O Theseus.

Th. Woe is me! why have I crowned my head with woven garlands, when misfortune greets my embassage? Unbolt the doors, servants, loose their fastenings, that I may see the piteous sight, my wife, whose death is death to me.

The palace opens, disclosing the corpse.

Ch. Woe! woe is thee for thy piteous lot! thou hast done thyself a hurt deep enough to overthrow this family. Ah! ah! the daring of it! done to death by violence and unnatural means, the desperate effort of thy own poor hand! Who cast the shadow o'er thy life, poor lady?

Th. Ah me, my cruel lot! sorrow hath done her worst on me. O fortune, how heavily hast thou set thy foot on me and on my house, by fiendish hands inflicting an unexpected stain? Nay, 'tis complete effacement of my life, making it impossible; for I see, alas! so wide an ocean of grief that I can never swim to shore again, nor breast the tide of this calamity. How shall I speak of thee, my poor wife, what tale of direst suffering tell? Thou art vanished

like a bird from the covert of my hand taking one headlong leap from me to Hades halls Alas and woe! this is a bitter bitter sight! This must be a judgment sent by God for the sins of an ancestor which from some far source I am bringing on myself

Ch My prince tis not to thee alone such sorrows come thou hast lost a noble wife but so have many others

Th Fain would I go hide me neath earth s blackest depth to dwell in darkness with the dead in misery now that I am reft of thy dear presence! for thou hast slain me than thyself even more Who can tell me what caused the fatal stroke that reached thy heart dear wife? Will no one tell me what befell? doth my palace all in vain give shelter to a herd of menials? Woe woe for thee my wife! sorrows past speech past bearing I behold within my house myself a ruined man my home a solitude my children orphans!

Ch Gone and left us hast thou fondest wife and noblest of all women neath the sun s bright eye or night s star lit radiance Poor house what sorrows are thy portion now! My eyes are wet with streams of tears to see thy fate but the sequel to this tragedy has long with terror filled me

Th Ha! what means this letter? clasped in her dear hand it hath some strange tale to tell Hath she poor lady as a last request written her bidding as to my marriage and her children? Take heart poor ghost no wife henceforth shall wed thy Theseus or invade his house Ah! how yon seal of my dead wife stamped with her golden ring affects my sight! Come I will unfold the sealed packet and read her letter s message to me

Ch Woe unto us! Here is yet another evil in the train by heaven sent Looking to what has happened I should count my lot in life no longer worth one s while to gain My master s house alas! is ruined brought to naught I say Spare it O Heaven if it may be Hearken to my prayer for I see as with prophetic eye an omen boding mischief

Th O horror! woe on woe! and still they come too deep for words too heavy to bear Ah me!

Ch What is it? speak if I may share in it

Th This letter loudly tells a hideous tale! where can I escape my load of woe? For I am ruined and undone so awful are the words I find here written clear as if she cried them to me woe is me!

Ch Alas! thy words declare themselves the harbingers of woe

Th I can no longer keep the cursed tale within the portal of my lips cruel though its utterance be Ah me! Hippolytus hath dared by brutal force to violate my honour recking naught of Zeus whose awful eye is over all O father Poseidon once didst thou promise to fulfil three prayers of mine answer one of these and slay my son let him not escape this single day if the prayers thou gavest me were indeed with issue fraught

Ch O king I do conjure thee call back that prayer hereafter thou wilt know thy error Hear I pray

Th Impossible! Moreover I will banish him from this land and by one of two fates shall he be struck down either Poseidon out of respect to my prayer will cast his dead body into the house of Hades or exiled from this land a wanderer to some foreign shore shall he eke out a life of misery

Ch Lo! where himself doth come thy son Hippolytus in good time dismiss thy hurtful rage king Theseus and bethink thee what is best for thy family

Enter HIPPOLYTUS

Hi I heard thy voice father and hasted to come hither yet know I not the cause of thy present sorrow but would fain learn of thee Ha! what is this? thy wife a corpse I see this is passing strange twas but now I left her a moment since she looked upon the light How came she thus? the manner of her death? this would I learn of thee father Art dumb? silence availeth not in trouble nay for the heart that fain would know all must show its curiosity even in sorrow s hour Be sure it is not right father to hide misfortunes from those who love ay more than love thee

Th O ye sons of men victims of a thousand idle errors why teach your countless crafts why scheme and seek to find a way for everything while one thing ye know not nor ever yet have made your prize a way to teach them wisdom whose souls are void of sense?

Hi A very master in his craft the man who can force fools to be wise! But these ill timed subtleties of thine father make me fear thy tongue is running riot through trouble

Th Fie upon thee! man needs should have some certain test set up to try his friends some touchstone of their hearts to know each friend whether he be true or false all men should have two voices one the voice of honesty expediency s the other so would honesty confute its knavish opposite and then we could not be deceived

Hi Say hath some friend been slandering me and hath he still thine ear? am I though guiltless banned? I am amazed indeed thy random frantic words fill me with wild alarm

Th O the mind of mortal man! to what lengths will it proceed? What limit will its bold assurance have? for if it goes on growing as man s life advances, and each successor outdo the man before him in villainy the gods will have to add another sphere unto the world which shall take in the knaves and villains Behold this man he my own son hath outraged mine honour his guilt most clearly proved by my dead wife Now since thou hast dared this loathly crime come look thy father in the face Art thou the man who dost with gods consort as one above the vulgar herd? art thou the chaste and sinless saint? Thy boasts will never persuade me to be guilty of attributing ignorance to gods Go then vaunt thyself and drive thy petty trade in viands formed of lifeless food take Orpheus for thy chief and go a revelling with all honour for the vapourings of many a written scroll seeing thou now art caught

Let al beware I say of such hypocrites! who hunt their prey with fine word and all the while are schemin illainy She is dead dost th nk that th s will sa e thee? Why this con t thee more than all, abandoned wr tch! What oaths, what pleas can outweigh this letter so that thou shouldst scape thy doom? Thou wilt assert she hated thee that t t th bastard and the true born child nature has h rself put wa it seems then by thy showing she made a sorry bargain with her life if to gratify her hate of thee she lost what most sh prized 'Tis said no doubt, that frailty finds no place in man but is innat in woman my experience is, young men re no more secure than women whenso the Q een of Love excites a youthful brea t altho gh their sex comes in to help them Yet why d I thus bandy w rd w th thee when before me lies the corpse to be th clea est w tness? Bego e at once an exile from this land and e r set foot again n god built Athens r in the confines of my dominio For if I am tam ly to submit to this treatment from such as thee no mo e w ll S nis,[1] r bber of the Isthmus, bear m wit ess how I slew him but say my boasts a e id no will those ocks Scironian, that fringe the sea call me the miscrea ts sc ur e.

Ch I know n t h w to call happy a y child of man for that which was first has turned and now is la t

H F the thy wrath and the tension of thy m d a e te rible yet this charge speci us thou h ts arguments appear be *omes* a calumny if one la t bare Small skill ha e I *e speaking to a* cr d but ha e a read er wit for comrades of mine ow ge and small ompan es. Yea and th s is s it should be f t th whom the wise despise are bet te q alified to speak bef a mob Yet am I *con* tra ed under th *present* c *cumstan* es t b eak silence And t the outset w ll I tak the po nt which formed th bas of thy stealth attack o me de signed to put m out of co rt unhea d dost see yon s n thi earth? These do not *co* tain f all thou dost de s cha t ty surpas ing min To re *er nce* God f c nt th high st knowl d and to adopt as fri nds t those who attempt injustic h t su h ould blush t p opose t th companions u ht di ac f l or pl asu them b shameful ser ces to mock t friend ot my wa faith *but I* m e'en th same behind the r b cks as to th ir fa The ere cr m thou th nkest t at b me i is ju t th one I am u tai ted w th f r to this day have I kept me pu from women N r know I ht the co har I hear o se in pictu es, for I ha e no h to look e e on these so pu my g n soul I gra t my faim t hastity may t con n thee w ll t then f there t ho e e way I was cor rupted Did th w na xceed in beaut all h sex? Did I a pi to fill th h ba d pla e after h and s c ceed t thy house? That su ely would ha mad me out fool a eatu e v id f sense. Th wilt say *Your cha t ma fo es t I d st*

No, not say I sovereignty pleases only those whose hearts are quite corrupt Now I would be the first and best at all the games in Hellas, but second in the state for e er happy thus with the noblest for my friends F r there one may be happy a d the absence of danger gi es a charm beyond all princely joys One thing I ha e not said the rest thou hast H d I a witness to attest my purity and were I pitted ga nst her still alive facts would show thee on enquiry who the culprit was Now by Zeus, the god of oaths, and by the earth whereon we stand I swear to thee I ne er did lay ha d upon thy wife nor would ha e wished to, or ha e harboured such a tho ght Slay me ye gods! rob me of name and honour from home and city cast me forth a wan d ring exil o er the earth! nor sea nor land receive my bones when I am dead if I am such a m screant! I cannot say if she through fear destr yed herself for more than this am I fo b d W th her discretion took the place of chastity while I though chaste, was not discreet in using this virtue

Ch Thy oath by hea en strong security suffi ciently efutes th charge.

Th A wizard or mag cian mu t the fellow be to think he can first flout me his father then by cool ness master my resolve

H Fa her thy part ir this doth fill me with amaze wert thou my son and I thy sire by hea en! I would have slain not let thee off w th banishment had t thou presumed to olate m honour

Th A ju t remark! yet shalt thou not die by the sent nc thin own l ps pr n unce upon thyself for death that *cometh in a moment* is an easy end for *wretchedness*. Nay thou shalt be exiled from thy fath land and wander n to a f re gn sh re *drag out a life of misery* t r such a the wages of sin

H Oh! what wilt t ou do? Wilt t ou ban sh me without so m h a waiting for Time s evid nce on my case?

Th Ay beyond the sea beyond the bounds of Atlas, if I could so deeply do I hate thee

H What! banish me untried witho t e en test *ing* my oath the pled e I offe r th voi e of seers?

Th This letter he e though it bears no seers sig s, raigns thy pled es as for b rds that fly o er our hea ls, a lon farewell to them

H (*Aside*) G eat gods! why do I n t u lock my lips, seein that I am ru ned by you the objects of my re e ence? No I will not I should nowise per suade those whom I ought to and in a n should break the oath I swo e

Th Fi upon thee! that solemn air of th ne is mo than I can bea Be one fr m thy nat ve land f thw th!

H Which r shall I turn? Ah me! whose fr endly house will tak m in an exile on so gra e a charge?

Th Se k one who l ves to enterta n as guests and partners in his cr mes corrupt rs of m n w ves

H Ah m ! this wounds my heart a d brings me nigh t tears t th nk that I hould appear so vile and th beli e me so

Th Thy tears and fo ethought had been more in

[1] Sin and Sc ron w two notorious evil-doers, whom Theseus had slain.

season when thou didst presume to outrage thy father's wife

Hi O house I would thou couldst speak for me and witness if I am so vile!

Th Dost fly to speechless witnesses? This deed though it speaketh not proves thy guilt clearly

Hi Alas! Would I could stand and face myself so should I weep to see the sorrows I endure

Th Ay tis thy character to honour thyself far more than reverence thy parents as thou shouldst

Hi Unhappy mother! son of sorrow! Heaven keep all friends of mine from bastard birth!

Th Ho! servants drag him hence! You heard my proclamation long ago condemning him to exile

Hi Whoso of them doth lay a hand on me shall rue it thyself expel me if thy spirit move thee from the land

Th I will unless my word thou straight obey no pity for thy exile steals into my heart *Exit* THESEUS

Hi The sentence then it seems is passed Ah misery! How well I know the truth herein but know no way to tell it! O daughter of Latona dearest to me of all deities partner comrade in the chase far from glorious Athens must I fly Farewell city and land of Erechtheus farewell Trœzen most joyous home wherein to pass the spring of life tis my last sight of thee farewell! Come my comrades in this land young like me greet me kindly and escort me forth for never will ye behold a purer soul for all my father's doubts *Exit* HIPPOLYTUS

Ch In very deed the thoughts I have about the gods whenso they come into my mind do much to soothe its grief but though I cherish secret hopes of some great guiding will yet am I at fault when I survey the fate and doings of the sons of men change succeeds to change and man's life veers and shifts in endless restlessness Fortune grant me this I pray at heaven's hand—a happy lot in life and a soul from sorrow free opinions let me hold not too precise nor yet too hollow but lightly changing my habits to each morrow as it comes may I thus attain a life of bliss! For now no more is my mind free from doubts unlooked for sights greet my vision for lo! I see the morning star of Athens eye of Hellas driven by his father's fury to another land Mourn ye sands of my native shores ye oak groves on the hills where with his fleet hounds he would hunt the quarry to the death attending on Dictynna awful queen No more will he mount his car drawn by Venetian steeds *filling the course round Limna with* the prancing of his trained horses Nevermore in his father's house shall he wake the Muse that never slept beneath his lute strings no hand will crown the spots where rests the maiden Latona mid the boskage deep nor evermore shall our virgins vie to win thy love now thou art banished while I with tears at thy *unhappy fate shall endure a lot all* undeserved Ah! hapless mother in vain didst thou bring forth it seems I am angered with the gods out upon them! O ye linked Graces why are ye sending from his native land this poor youth a guiltless sufferer far from his home?

But lo! I see a servant of Hippolytus hasting with troubled looks towards the palace

Enter 2nd MESSENGER

2nd Messenger Ladies where may I find Theseus, king of the country? pray tell me if ye know is he within the palace here?

Ch Lo! himself approaches from the palace

Enter THESEUS

2nd Me Theseus I am the bearer of troublous tidings to thee and all citizens who dwell in Athens or the bounds of Trœzen

Th How now? hath some strange calamity o'ertaken these two neighbouring cities?

2nd Me In one brief word Hippolytus is dead Tis true one slender thread still links him to the light of life

Th Who slew him? Did some husband come to blows with him one whose wife like mine had suffered brutal violence?

2nd Me He perished through those steeds that drew his chariot and through the curses thou didst utter praying to thy sire the ocean king to slay thy son

Th Ye gods and king Poseidon thou hast proved my parentage by hearkening to my prayer! Say how he perished how fell the uplifted hand of Justice to smite the villain who dishonoured me?

2nd Me Hard by the wave beat shore were we combing out his horses manes weeping the while for one had come to say that Hippolytus was harshly exiled by thee and nevermore would return to set foot in this land Then came he telling the same doleful tale to us upon the beach and with him was a countless throng of friends who followed after At length he stayed his lamentation and spake Why weakly rave on this wise? My father's commands must be obeyed Ho! servants harness my horses to the chariot this is no longer now city of mine Thereupon each one of us bestirred himself and ere a man could say twas done we had the horses standing ready at our master's side Then he caught up the reins from the chariot rail first fitting his feet exactly in the hollows made for them But first with outspread palms he called upon the gods O Zeus now strike me dead if I have sinned and let my father learn how he is wronging me in death at least if not in life Therewith he seized the whip and lashed each horse in turn while we close by his chariot near the reins kept up with him along the *road that leads direct to Argos and Epidaurus* And just as we were coming to a desert spot a strip of sand beyond the borders of this country sloping right to the Saronic gulf there issued thence a deep rumbling sound as it were an earthquake a fearsome noise and the horses reared their heads and pricked their ears while we were filled with wild alarm to know whence came the sound when as we gazed toward the wave beat shore a wave tremendous we beheld towering to the skies so that from our view the cliffs of Sciron vanished for it hid the isthmus and the rock of Asclepius then swelling and frothing with a crest of foam the sea discharged it

toward t.. beach where stood the harnessed car and at t.. moment that it broke that on his road of wa rs, there issued from the wa e a monstrous bull, bose bellow..g filled th land w th fearsome echoes, t too awful as t seemed to us who witnessed t. A panic seized th horses there nd then, but our master to horses wa s quite used gripped in both hands his reins, and tw.. them to hi bod pu ed them backward as the sailor pulls his oar but the horses gnashed the forged bits between their teeth and bore him wildly on regardles f their mast s guiding hand or ..ein or jointed car And oft as he would tak th guidin rein nd steer for softer ground, showed that bull in front to turn him back ..ain, maddenin his team with terror but if in their frantic career they ran t wards th rocks, he would draw cl h t.. chariot rail, keeping up with them until, suddenl dashing the wheel against a stone, h pset and wrecked the car then was dire confusion, ax. boxes and linch pins s inni.. into th air Wh.. he poor youth, entan led in th eins was dra ed alon bound by a stubborn knot his poor head dashed against th rocks, his flesh all torn, the while he cried out piteously 'Stay stay m horses whom m own hand hath fed t the manger destroy me not utterl O luckless curs. of a father! Will no o.. come and sa me for all m irtue?" Now we, though much w longed to h lp, were l ft far behind. At last, I know not how he broke loose from the shapel eins that bound him, faint breath of l..e still in him but th horses disappeared and that portentous bull, amon th rocky ground, I know not where. I am but a sla e n thy house, ..is true O king yet will I ever believe so monstrous charg ..ainst th son character no! not thou h t.. whol rac f woman..kind should han tself, or on should fill with writin ery pine tree tablet grown on Ida sur as I m f his upri htness.

Ch. Alas! new trou les com t plagu us, nor is there an escape from fat and necessity

Th. M hatred for him wh hath thus suffered made m glad t th tidings, et from regard for the gods and him, because h is m son I feel neither joy nor sorrow at hi sufferings.

M B i sa w to brin th im hither or how are w t fulfil th wishes Bethink thee if b m thou wilt be schooled thou wilt not harshly treat h son in his sad plight

Th Brin him hither that when I see him face to fac wh hath denied ha in poll ted m wif honour I ma by words and hea en visitation co ict him.　　*Exit* CONFIDENTIAL MESSENGER.

Ch. Ah! C prus, thin th hand that guides the ..bborn hearts of gods and men thi e and that ..tendant boy s, who, with painted p.. image ga ..rs ound his ..ictim on fl ..ttering w.. O er land and boomin deep on golden pinion born fut ..e God f Love madd..ns th heart and be..ui.. g th senses f all whom he attacks, sa wh lps on mountains bred ocean ..mons ers, ..a ures of this sun warmed earth and man thine O C prus, thine alon t.. sovereign power to rule them all.

Enter ARTEMIS.

Artemis Hearken, I bid thee n ble son of Æ..eus lo! tis I Latona child that speak, I Artemis. Wh Theseus, to thy sorrow dost thou rejoice at these tidings, seein that thou hast slain th son most im piously listen.. to a charge n t clearly pro ed but falsel sworn to b thy wife? thou h clearly has the curse therefrom upon thee fal en Wh dost thou not for ..y shame hide beneath the dark places of the earth or change thy human life and soar on wings to escape this tribulation? Mongst men of honour thou hast now no share in life. Hearken Theseus I will put thy wretched case Yet will it nau ht a ail thee if I do, but ex th heart still w th this intent I came to show thy son s pure heart —that he ma d e w th honour—as well th frenzy and in a sense, the nobleness of thy wif for she was cruell stun with a passion for th son by that goddess whom all we that joy in irgin purity de test And thou h she str e to conquer lo e by reso lution, yet b no fault of hers she fell, thanks to her nurse s strat..gy who did r eal her malady unto th son und r oath. But h would none of her coun sels, a indeed was ri ht nor et when thou didst revile him would h break th oath he swore from pi ty Sh mea..tim fearful of being found out wrote a lyin letter destroyin.. by guile thy son, but yet persuadin thee.

Th Woe i me!

A Doth m ory wound thee Theseus? B still awhil hear what f llows, so wilt thou ha e more cause to groan. Dost remember those three pra ers th father granted thee frau ht w th certain issue? 'Tis on f these thou h st m su ed unnatural wretch, ainst thy son instead of aiming t at an enem Th sea god sire tis true for all his kind intent hath gra ted that boon h was compelled by reason of his promise, to grant But thou alike in his e es nd in mine hast shewn thy e il heart in that thou hast f restalled all proof or oice pro phetic ha t made no enquiry nor taken time for consideration, but w th undue haste cursed thy son e en to th death.

Th. Perdition seize m ! Queen reve ed!

A An awful deed was thine but still e en for this thou ma est obtain pardon for t was Cypris that would ha e t so, sati th fury of her soul. For this is law mongst us god none of us will thwart his nei hbour will, but e er we stand aloof. For b well sured, did I t fear Zeus, ne er would I ha incu ed the b tter shame of handin o er to death a man of all his kind to me most dear As for thy sin first th ..norance absol es thee from its ..llainy next th wif who s dead was la ish in her use of con incin arguments to influence thy mind. On thee in thi f thi torm of woe hath burst et t som grief to m a w ll for when the right cous di.e the ..is o.o n hea en albeit we try to destro th wicked house and hom

Ch. Lo! where h comes, this hapless youth, his fair o ng flesh and burn locks most shamefull handled Unhappy house! what twofold sorrow doth

o ertake its halls through heav en s ordinance!

HIPPOLYTUS *is carried in*

Hi Ah! ah! woe is me! foully undone by an im pious father s impious imprecation! Undone un done! woe is me! Through my head shoot fearful pains my brain throbs convulsively Stop let me rest my worn out frame Oh oh! Accursèd steeds that mine own hand did feed ye have been my ruin and my death O by the gods good sirs I beseech ye softly touch my wounded limbs Who stands there at my right side? Lift me tenderly with slow and even step conduct a poor wretch *cursed by his mistaken sire Great Zeus dost thou* see this? Me thy reverent worshipper me who left all men behind in purity plunged thus into yawn ing Hades neath the earth reft of life in vain the toils I have endured through my piety towards man kind Ah me! ah me! O the thrill of anguish shoot ing through me! Set me down poor wretch I am come Death to set me free! Kill me end my suffer ings O for a sword two edged to hack my flesh and close this mortal life! Ill fated curse of my father! the crimes of bloody kinsmen [1] ancestors of old now pass their boundaries and tarry not and upon me are they come all guiltless as I am ah! why? Alas alas! what can I say? How from my life get rid of this relentless agony? O that the stern Death god night s black visitant would give my sufferings rest!

Ar Poor sufferer! cruel the fate that links thee to it! Thy noble soul hath been thy ruin

Hi Ah! the fragrance from my goddess wafted! Even in my agony I feel thee near and find relief she is here in this very place my goddess Artemis

Ar She is poor sufferer! the goddess thou hast loved the best

Hi Dost see me mistress mine? dost see my pres ent suffering?

Ar I see thee but mine eyes no tear may weep

Hi Thou hast none now to lead the hunt or tend thy fane

Ar None now yet e en in death I love thee still

Hi None to groom thy steeds or guard thy shrines

Ar Twas Cypris mistress of iniquity devised this evil

Hi Ah me! now know I the goddess who de stroyed me

Ar She was jealous of her slighted honour vexed at thy chaste life

Hi Ah! then I see her single hand hath struck down three of us

Ar Thy sire and thee and last thy father s wife

Hi My sire s ill luck as well as mine I mourn

Ar He was deceived by a goddess design

Hi Woe is thee my father in this sad mischance!

Th My son I am a ruined man life has no joys for me

Hi For this mistake I mourn thee rather than myself

Th O that I had died for thee my son!

Hi Ah! those fatal gifts thy sire Poseidon gave

Th Would God these lips had never uttered that prayer!

Hi Why not? thou wouldst in any case have slain me in thy fury then

Th Yes Heaven had perverted my power to think

Hi O that the race of men could bring a curse upon the gods!

Ar Enough! for though thou pass to gloom be neath the earth the wrath of Cypris shall not at her will fall on thee unrequited because thou hadst a noble righteous soul For I with mine own hand will with these unerring shafts avenge me on an other who is her votary dearest to her of all the sons of men And to thee poor sufferer for thy an *guish now will I grant high honours in the city of* Trœzen for thee shall maids unwed before their marriage cut off their hair thy harvest through the long roll of time of countless bitter tears Yea and for ever shall the virgin choir hymn thy sad mem ory nor shall Phædra s love for thee fall into obli vion and pass away unnoticed But thou O son of old Ægeus take thy son in thine arms draw him close to thee for unwittingly thou slewest him and men may well commit an error when gods put it in their way And thee Hippolytus I admonish hate not thy sire for in this death thou dost but meet thy destined fate And now farewell! tis not for me to gaze upon the dead or pollute my sight with death scenes and e en now I see thee nigh that evil moment *Exit* ARTEMIS

Hi Farewell blest virgin queen! leave me now! How easily thou resignest our long friendship! I am reconciled with my father at thy desire yea for ever before I would obey thy bidding Ah me! the darkness is settling even now upon my eyes. Take me father in thy arms lift me up

Th Woe is me my son! what art thou doing to me thy hapless sire!

Hi I am a broken man yes I see the gates that close upon the dead

Th Canst leave me thus with murder on my soul!

Hi No no I set thee free from this blood guilti ness

Th What sayest thou? dost absolve me from blood shed?

Hi Artemis the archer queen is my witness that I do

Th My own dear child how generous dost thou show thyself to thy father!

Hi Farewell dear father! a long farewell to thee!

Th O that holy noble soul of thine!

Hi Pray to have children such as me born in law ful wedlock

Th O leave me not my son endure awhile

Hi Tis finished my endurance I die father quickly cover my face with a mantle *Dies*

Th O glorious Athens realm of Pallas what a splendid hero ye have lost! Ah me ah me! How oft shall I remember thy evil work O Cypris!

Ch On all our citizens hath come this universal sorrow unforeseen Now shall the copious tear gush forth for sad news about great men takes more than usual hold upon the heart *Exeunt* OMNES

[1] Such as Tantalus and Pelops Atreus and Thyestes.

[2] Adonis.

ALCESTIS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Apollo	Alcestis
Death	Attendant
Chorus of Old Men o Pherae	Admetus
	Eumelus
Maid	Heracles
Pheres	

Before Admet s palace in Pherae Enter APOLLO.

Apollo Halls of Admetus, where n I steeled my heart t be content w th a servant s board god though I was. Zeus was to blame he slew my son Asclepius, piercin his bosom with thunde bolt hereat I was enraged and smote his C cl pes, f rg ers of the hea enly fire so my sire in recompense for thi forced me to become a slav in a mortal s home. Then came I t this land and kept a stranger s flocks, and to this day ha e been th sa u of this house. For in Pheres son I found a man a h ly as myself, and him I sa ed from death by cheating Destiny for they promised me, those goddesses of f te that Admetus should escape the impend g doom, if he found a substitute f r the powers below So h went throu h all his list of fri nds, made trial of each, b fath r and th a ed m ther that bare him b t none he found sa his wife lone that was willin to d for him and fo o the light of life she now w thin the house is ph ld in his arms, gasping out h r lif for to-da s h doomed to d and pass from life t death (*Enter* DEATH) But I f r fear pollut n o e tak me in the house am lea n g th sh lter of this roof I lov so well, for alread I see Death hard by th pr est f souls departed who i on his way to lead her t the h ll of Hades tru t time he comes, wat hing this day that calls he t her doom

D a h Ha! What dost thou at this house? why t thou rt ranging her Phoebu ? O wain tho wrongest m eir umscrib g and limitin the hon our of th th wo ld Wert thou not content to hind th death of Adm tus, by thy kna sh cun m baulkin Destiny but ow gain ha t thou armed thee with th bow and a t keeping guard e he th da ght f Pelias, who u dertook of her f ee ill, to di f r her lord and set him free

Ap Ne fea I ha be sure just ce and fair p ea t urg

D What has that bow to do f thou hast justice on th sid

Ap Tis m hab t e e t carry t

D A nd to h lp this house more tha right

Ap Th reason is, I cann t bea a fri nd s d s t ess

De Wilt rob m f this second corpse likewise?

Ap Come! I did not take the other from thee by v olence

De Then how is it he li es abo e the earth and not beneath?

Ap He ga e his wife n tead her whom now thou art come to fetch

De Yea a d I will bear her hence to the nether w rld

Ap Take her and go, for I do not suppose I can persuade thee.

De To slay my rightful v ct m? Why that is my appointed task

Ap Nay but to lay thy deadly hand on those who soon would d

De I see thy drift thy eager plea

Ap Is it then possible that Alcestis should attain old age?

De It is n t possible I too, methinks, find a pleasure in my rights.

Ap Thou canst not anyhow take m re than one life.

De When young li es die I eap a higher honour

Ap Should she d old a sumptuou funeral will she ha e

De Phoebus, the law thou layest down is all in favour of the rich.

Ap What mean st thou? rt so wise and I ne er knew it?

D Those who ha e wealth would buy the chance f their dying old

Ap It seems then thou wilt not grant me this fav ur

D Not I my custom s well thou knowest

Ap That I d customs men detest and gods abh r

De Thou can t not realise ery lawless wish

Ap M rk m thou shalt have a heck for all thy excess fierceness such a h o hall the e come to Pheres halls, by Eurystheu sent to f t h a team of steeds from th w ntry w ld of Thrace he a guest h in these halls of Adm tus, will w est this woman from thee by sheer f c So wilt thou get o tha ks from m but y t wilt do this all the same, nd earn my hatred too. *Exit*

De Thou wilt not gain thy purpose any the more for all thy many words that wo man shall to Hades' halls go down, I tell thee. Lo! I am going for her

that with the sword I may begin my rites for he whose hair this sword doth hallow is sacred to the gods below *Exit*

Enter CHORUS

Semi Chorus I What means this silence in front of the palace? why is the house of Admetus stricken dumb?

Semi Chorus II Not one friend near to say if we must mourn our queen as dead or if she liveth yet and sees the sun Alcestis daughter of Pelias by me and all esteemed the best of wives to her husband

Semi Ch I Doth any of you hear a groan or sound of hands that smite together or the voice of lamentation telling all is over and done? Yet is there no servant stationed about the gate no not one O come thou saving god to smooth the swelling waves of woe!

Semi Ch II Surely were she dead they would not be so still

Semi Ch I May be her corpse is not yet from the house borne forth

Semi Ch II Whence that inference? I am not so sanguine What gives thee confidence?

Semi Ch I How could Admetus let his noble wife go unattended to the grave?

Semi Ch II Before the gates I see no lustral water from the spring as custom doth ordain should be at the gates of the dead no shorn lock lies on the threshold which as thou knowest falls in mourning for the dead no choir of maidens smites its youthful palms together

Semi Ch I And yet this is the appointed day

Semi Ch II What meanest thou by this?

Semi Ch I The day appointed for the journey to the world below

Semi Ch II Thou hast touched me to the heart even to the soul

Ch Whoso from his youth up has been accounted virtuous needs must weep to see the good suddenly cut off 'Tis done no single spot in all the world remains whither one might steer a course either to Lycia[1] or to the parched abodes[2] of Ammon to release the hapless lady's soul on comes death with step abrupt nor know I to whom I should go of all who at the gods altars offer sacrifice Only the son of Phœbus[3] if he yet saw this light of day—Ah! then might she have left the dark abode and gates of Hades and have come again for he would raise the dead to life till that the thunderbolt's forked flame hurled by Zeus smote him But now what further hope of life can I welcome to me? Our lords have ere this done all they could on every altar streams the blood of abundant sacrifice yet our sorrows find no cure

Enter MAID

Lo! from the house cometh a handmaid weeping what shall I be told hath chanced? Grief may well be pardoned if aught happeneth to one's master yet I fain would learn whether our lady still is living or haply is no more

Maid Alive yet dead thou mayst call her

Ch Why how can the same person be alive yet dead?

Ma She is sinking even now and at her last gasp

Ch My poor master! how sad thy lot to lose so good a wife!

Ma He did not know his loss until the blow fell on him

Ch Is there then no more a hope of saving her?

Ma None the fated day comes on so fast

Ch Are then the fitting rites already taking place o'er her body?

Ma Death's garniture is ready wherewith her lord will bury her

Ch Well let her know though she die she must her fame ranks far above any other wife's beneath the sun

Ma Far above! of course it does who will gainsay it? What must the woman be who hath surpassed her? For how could any wife have shown a clearer regard for her lord than by offering in his stead to die? Thus much the whole city knows right well but thou shalt hear with wonder what she did within the house For when she knew the fatal day was come she washed her fair white skin with water from the stream then from her cedar chests drew forth vesture and ornaments and robed herself becomingly next standing before the altar hearth she prayed Mistress mine behold! I pass beneath the earth to thee in suppliant wise will I my latest prayer address be mother to my orphans and to my boy unite a loving bride to my daughter a noble husband Let them not die as I their mother perish now untimely in their youth but let them live their glad lives out happy in their native land To every altar in Admetus halls she went and crowned them and prayed plucking from myrtle boughs their foliage with never a tear or groan nor did her coming trouble change the colour of her comely face Anon into her bridal bower she burst and then her tears broke forth and thus she cried O couch whereon I loosed my maiden state for the man in whose cause I die farewell! no hate I feel for thee for me alone hast thou undone dying as I die from fear of betraying thee and my lord Some other wife will make thee hers more blest maybe than me but not more chaste And she fell upon her knees and kissed it till with her gushing tears the whole bed was wet At last when she had had her fill of weeping she tore herself from the bed and hurried headlong forth and oft as she was leaving the chamber turned she back and cast herself once more upon the couch while her children were weeping as they clung to their mother's robes but she took them each in turn in her arms and kissed them fondly as a dying mother might And all the servants in the house fell a crying in sorrow for their mistress but she held out her hand to each nor was there one so mean but she gave him a word and took his answer back Such are the sorrows in the halls of Admetus Dying he had died once for all but by avoiding

[1] To a shrine of Apollo

[2] The temple of Zeus Ammon in the deserts of Libya.

[3] Asclepius

death he hath a legacy of grief that he will ne er forget

Ch Doubtless Admetus so to s in thi calamity f h must lose so good a wife

Ma Ah es! he weeps, hol n in his arms h s darli if a d pra s her not to leave him im possi request! for f e s worn and wasted w th illness, and lies exhausted a sad b rden in h s arms. Stil, th u h h r b ath omes h rt and scant she yearns t gaze t on the s h e f r ne ermore b now the l t and latest t m h r eye shall see hi radian b But I ul go th p ese ce to annou ce for u not ll who ha e th g ood ill to t nd by thei ma ters w th k dl heart i ad ersity But th u of old has bee my ma ter s f i nd *Exit*

Ch O Zeus, what way out of these sorrows can be f und? h w c n we loose the bonds of fate that bind our l d?

Comes some one f rth? Am I at once to cut my ha nd ca t the sable r be abo t me?

T o plainly av too plainly f end still let us to hea e pray to the gods powe i ery g eat

O k Pæan, d se f r Adm tus some means of escape from his sorrows.

Yes yes, co tri e t f r thou in days gone by didst find sal ati n fo him so now be th u a sa iour from the toils f death and stay bloodthirsty Hades.

Woe! woe! alas! Thou son of Pheres, woe! Ah thy fate loun thy wife!

Is t this e gh to mak thee lay thyself ah! more tha cause enou h t t th noose loft and fit t to the neck?

Yea for to-d w lt th u w tness the death f her that was not m re! dear but dearest of the dear

Look look! h om the ey n now he husband w th h r from th h use

Cry l ud and a l O land of Ph ræ wail fo the best f om with si kness worn she passes eath th earth t H des lord below

Ne er e er ll I say that m rriag brings more joy tha gri f I onjectu e b the past nd w t ess these mi f rt es f our ki g for h when wid wed of th s n ble if will f th futu e lead lif that is o l fe at ll

Enter ALCESTIS ADMETUS *and* CHILDREN

Al *ss* O u god lamp of day! O scudding cloud that da c long th k !

Admet H sees us both w th a gus bo ed albeit guiltless f a y crime again t the gods, for the hi h th d th s du

Al O earth O h lt ring roof and y my ma den chambers my nat land I lcos!

Ad L ft th self nh ppy wif f rsake m not nt eat th m ghty god t pit us

Al I see th two-oa ed kiff I see it nd Charon death ferryman h s hand pon th boatman s p le u calli g m en w Wh l gerest thou? Hasten Thou t keepst me Thu in h eager haste he hurries m

Ad Ah m ! bitte t m s th s oy g th u peakest f Unhappy w fe, hat woes a e ours!

Al On draws me draws me hence seest thou not? to the courts of death w ged H des glaring from beneath h s dark b ows. What wilt thou th me? Unhan l me On what a journey am I setting out most wretched wom n !!

Ad B tter journey to thy friends, yet most of all t m and to thy babes the partn rs in this sorrow

Al Hands off! hands off at once!

Lay me d wn I cannot stand Hades standeth near and with it gloom steal n ght upon my eyes.

O my ch ldr n my children ye ha e no mother now Fare ye well my babes, li e on beneath the l ght!

Ad Woe is me! this is a message of sorrow to me worse than a ght that death can do Steel not thy hea t to lea e me I implore by hea en by thy babes whom thou wilt make orphans nay raise thy self hay coura For if thou d e I can no longer live my life my death are in thy hands thy lo e is what I w rship

Al Admetus lo! thou seest how t is with me to thee I fain w uld tell my wishes e e I die Thee I set before myself a d n tead of li ng hav en sured thy l fe and so I d e though I need not ha e died f r thee but mi ht have taken for my h s ba d whom I would of the Thessalians, a d ha e had home blest with royal power reft f thee with my children orphans, I cared not to li e nor thou h c ow ed with youth s fair gifts, wherein I used to joy d d I grudge them Yet the father that begat thee the mother th t ba e thee gave thee up tho gh the had reached a t me of l fe when to d were w ll so sa ing the th ir h ld nd w n n a noble death For thou wert their only son nor had they any hope when thou wert dead of other off pri g A d I should ha e l ved and thou the r mnant of our da s, no wo ldst th u ha e wept thy f lo s, no ha e had an orphan fam ly But some god h th caused these thi gs to be e en as they r E ou h! Remember thou th grat tude due to me for th s yea for I shall ne er a k thee for a dequate retu for nau ht is prized m e hi h ly than ur life but just is my equest as th u thy self must say s nce th u no less than I dost love these chud n if so be thou think st ari ht Be con tent to l t th m rul my house and do not marry a new w fe to be stepm ther to these childre for she fr m jealousy f so she be a w man w rse than m w ll st etch out her hand ga nst th ch ld en of our union Then do n t this, I do beseech the For th stepm the that succeed hateth h ldren of a f rmer match cruel as the vipe s are he tender m es. A s n tis true hath in his si e tower of st ength to wh m h speak and ha his answe back but thou, my da ght r how shall th ma d nhood be passed in honour? What shall thy experience be of thy father s w f ? She may fa ten on th e some foul eport thy yo th f l bloom and frustrat thy marriag Neve shall thy moth r lead thee to the bridal bed no by he p esence in thy tra a l hearten thee my child when a mother s kindness t i umphs over all. No, f r I must die and lo! this e il

cometh to me not to-morrow nor yet on the third day of the month but in a moment shall I be counted among the souls that are no more Fare ye well be happy and thou husband canst boast thou hadst a peerless wife and you children that you had such an one for mother

Ch Take heart I do not hesitate to answer for him he will perform all this unless his mind should go astray

Ad It shall be so fear not it shall alive thou wert the only wife I had and dead shalt thou none else be called mine no Thessalian maid shall ever take thy place and call me lord not though she spring from lineage high nor though besides she be the fairest of her sex Of children I have enough god grant I may in them be blessed! for in thee has it been otherwise No year long mourning will I keep for thee but all my life through lady loathing the mother that bare me and hating my father for they were friends in word but not in deed But thou didst give thy dearest for my life and save it May I not then mourn to lose a wife like thee? And I will put an end to revelry to social gatherings o er the wine forego the festal crown and music which once reigned in my halls For nevermore will I touch the lyre nor lift my soul in song to the Libyan flute for thou hast taken with thee all my joy in life But in my bed thy figure shall be laid full length by cunning artists fashioned thereon will I throw myself and folding my arms about thee call upon thy name and think I hold my dear wife in my embrace *although I do not chill comfort this no doubt* but still I shall relieve my soul of its sad weight and thou wilt come to me in dreams and gladden me For sweet it is to see our friends come they when they will e en by night

Had I the tongue the tuneful voice of Orpheus to charm Demeter s daughter or her husband by my lay and bring thee back from Hades I had gone down nor Pluto s hound nor Charon ferryman of souls whose hand is on the oar had held me back till to the light I had restored thee alive At least do thou await me there against the hour I die prepare a home for me to be my true wife till For in this same cedar coffin I will bid these children lay me with thee and stretch my limbs by thine for never even in death may I be severed from thee alone found faithful of them all

Ch Lo! I too will share with thee thy mourning for her friend with friend for this is but her due

Al My children ye with your own ears have heard your father s promise that he will never wed another wife to set her over you nor e er dishonour me

Ad Yea so I promise now and accomplish it I will

Al On these conditions receive the children from my hand

Ad I receive them dear pledges by a dear hand given

Al Take thou my place and be a mother to these babes

Ad Sore will be their need when they are reft of thee

Al O my children I am passing to the world below when *my* life was *needed most*

Ad Ah me what can I do bereft of thee?

Al Thy sorrow Time will soothe tis the dead who are as naught

Ad Take me O take me I beseech with thee neath the earth

Al Enough that I in thy stead am dying

Ad O Destiny! of what a wife art thou despoiling me!

Al Lo! *the darkness deepens on my drooping eyes*

Ad Lost indeed am I if thou dear wife wilt really leave me

Al Thou mayst speak of me as naught as one whose life is o er

Ad Lift up thy face leave not thy children

Al Tis not my own free will O my babes, fare well!

Ad Look look on them but once

Al My end is come

Ad What mean st thou? art leaving us?

Al Farewell! *Dies*

Ad Lost! lost! woe is me!

Ch She is gone the wife of Admetus is no mor

Eumelus O my hard fate! My mother has passed to the realms below she lives no more dear father neath the sun Alas for her! she leaves us ere her time and to me bequeaths an orphan s life Behold that staring eye those nerveless hands! Hear me mother hear me *I implore!* tis I who call thee now I thy tender chick printing my kisses on thy lips

Ad She cannot hear she cannot see a heavy blow hath fortune dealt us you children and me

Eu O father I am but a child to have my loving mother leave me here alone O cruel my fate alas! and thine my sister sharer in my cup of woe Woe to thee father! in vain in vain didst thou take a wife and hast not reached the goal of eld with her for she is gone before and now that thou art dead my mother our house is all undone

Ch Admetus these misfortunes thou must bear Thou art by no means the first nor yet shalt be the last of men to lose a wife of worth know this we all of us are debtors unto death

Ad I understand this is no sudden flight of ill hither I was ware of it and long have pined But since I am to carry the dead forth to her burial stay here with me and to that inexorable god in Hades raise your antiphone While to all Thessalians in my realm I do proclaim a general mourning for this lady with hair shorn off and robes of sable hue all ye who harness steeds for cars or single horses ride cut off their manes with the sharp steel Hush d be every pipe silent every lyre throughout the city till twelve full moons are past for never again shall I bury one whom I love more no! nor one more loyal to me honour from me is her due for she for me hath died she and she alone

Exeunt ADMETUS *and* EUMELUS *with the other children*

Ch. Daughter of Pelias, be thine a happy life in the sunless home in Hades' halls! Let Hades know that swarthy god and that old man who sits to row and steer alike at his death-ferry that he hath carried o'er the lake of Acheron in his two-oared skiff a woman peerless amidst her sex. Oft of thee the Muses' votaries shall sing on the seven stringed mountain shell and in hymns that need no harp glorifying thee oft as the season in his cycle cometh round at Sparta in that Carnean month when all night long the moon sails high o'erhead, yea and in splendid Athens, happy town. So glorious a theme hast thou death bequeathed to tuneful bards. Would it were in my power and range to bring thee to the light from the chambers of Hades and the streams of Cocytus with the oar that sweeps yon nether flood. For thou, and thou alone most dear of women, hadst the courage to redeem thy husband from Hades in exchange for thy own life. Light lie the earth above thee lady! And if ever thy lord take to him a new wife, I vow he will earn my hatred and thy children's too. His mother had no heart to plunge into the darkness of the tomb for her son, no! nor his aged sire. Their own child they had not the courage to rescue, the wretches! albeit they were grey headed. But thou in thy youth and beauty hast died for thy lord and gone thy way. O be it mine to have for partner such a loving wife! for this lot is rare in life. Surely she should be my helpmeet all my life and never cause one tear.

Enter HERACLES.

Heracles Mine hosts, dwellers on this Pheraean soil, say shall I find Admetus in the house?

Ch. The son of Pheres is within Heracles. Tell me what need is bringing thee to the Thessalian land, to visit this city of the Pheraeans?

H. I am performing a labour for Tirynthian Eurystheus.

Ch. And whither art thou journeying? on what wandering art thou forced to go?

H. To fetch the chariot steeds of Thracian Diomedes.

Ch. How canst thou? art a stranger to the ways of thy host?

H. I am, for never yet have I gone to the land of the Bistones.

Ch. Thou canst not master his horses without fighting.

H. Still I cannot refuse these labours.

Ch. Then shalt thou slay them and return, or thyself be slain and stay there.

H. It will not be the first hard course that I have run.

Ch. And what will be thy gain, suppose thou master their lord?

H. The steeds will I drive away to the Tirynthian king.

Ch. No easy task to bit their jaws.

H. Easy enough unless their nostrils vomit fire.

Ch. With their ravening jaws they rend the limbs of men.

Apr. 1

He Thou speakest of the food of mountain beasts, not of horses.

Ch. Their mangers blood bedabbled thou shalt see.

He Whose son doth he who feeds them boast to be?

Ch. Ares' son king of the golden targe of Thrace.

He This toil again is but a piece of my ill luck hard it ever is and still is growing steeper if I with Ares' own begotten sons must fight first with Lycaon, next with Cycnus, while now I am bound on this third contest to engage the horses and their master. Yet shall no man ever see Alcmena's son trembling at his foemen's prowess.

Ch. See where Admetus, lord of this land comes in person from the palace forth.

Enter ADMETUS.

Ad. Hail! son of Zeus, from Perseus sprung

He I to thee also, Admetus, king of Thessaly

Ad. Would there were! yet thy kindly heart I know full well.

H. Why dost thou appear with head shorn thus in mourning?

Ad. To-day I am to bury one who is dead.

He Heaven avert calamity from thy children!

Ad. The children I have begotten are alive within my house

He Thy father maybe is gone well, he was ripe to go.

Ad. No, Heracles, he lives my mother too.

He It cannot be thy wife is dead thy Alcestis?

Ad. I can a twofold tale tell about her

He Dost mean that she is dead, or living still?

Ad. She lives, yet lives no more that is my grief.

He I am no wiser yet thy words are riddles to me

Ad. Knowest thou not the doom she must undergo?

H. I know she did submit to die in thy stead

Ad. How then is she still alive if so she promised?

He Ah! weep not thy wife before the day put that off till then.

Ad. The doomed is dead the dead no more exists.

H. Men count to be and not to be something part.

Ad. Thy verdict this, O Heracles, mine another

H. Why weepest then? which of thy dear ones is the dead

Ad. 'Tis a woman I spoke of a woman just now

He A stranger or one of thine own kin?

Ad. A stranger yet in another sense related to my house.

H. How then came she by her death in house of thine?

Ad. Her father dead she lived here as an orphan.

He Ah! would I had found thee free from grief, Admetus!

Ad. With what intent dost thou devise this speech?

H. I will seek some other friendly hearth.

Ad. Never O prince! Heaven forefend such dire disgrace!

He A guest is a burden to sorrowing friends if come he should

Ad The dead are dead Come in

He To feast in a friend s house of sorrow is shameful

Ad The guest chambers lie apart whereto we will conduct thee

He Let me go ten thousandfold shall be my thanks to thee

Ad Thou must not go to any other hearth (*To a Servant*) Go before open the guest rooms that face not these chambers and bid my stewards see there is plenty of food then shut the doors that lead into the courtyard for tis not seemly that guests when at their meat should hear the voice of weeping or be made sad *Exit* HERACLES

Ch What doest thou? With such calamity before thee hast thou the heart Admetus to welcome visitors? What means this folly?

Ad Well and if I had driven him from my house and city when he came to be my guest wouldst thou have praised me more? No indeed! for my calamity would have been no whit less while I should have been more churlish And this would have been another woe to add to mine that my house should be called no friend to guests Yea and I find him myself the best of hosts whene er to Argos thirsty land I come

Ch Why then didst thou conceal thy present misfortune if as thy own lips declare it was a friend that came?

Ad He would never have entered my house had he known aught of my distress Maybe there are those who think me but a fool for acting thus and these will blame me but my halls have never learnt to drive away or treat with scorn my guests

Ch O home of hospitality thrown open by thy lord to all now and ever! In thee it was that Pythian Apollo the sweet harper deigned to make his home and in thy halls was content to lead a shepherd s life piping o er the sloping downs shepherd s madrigals to thy flocks And spotted lynxes couched amid his sheep in joy to hear his melody and the lions tawny troop left the glen of Othrys and came came too the dappled fawn on nimble foot from beyond the crested pines and frisked about thy lyre O Phœbus for very joy at thy gladsome minstrelsy And so it is thy lord inhabits a home rich in countless flocks by Bœbe s lovely mere bounding his tilled corn land and his level pastures with the clime of the Molossi near the sun s dark stable and holding sway as far as the harbourless strand of the Ægean neath Pelion s shadow Now too hath he opened wide his house and welcomed a guest although his eye is wet with tears in mourning for his wife so dear but lately dead within his halls yea for noble birth to noble feeling is inclined And in the good completest wisdom dwells and at my heart sits the bold belief that heaven s servant will be blessed

Ad Men of Pheræ kindly gathered here lo! even now my servants are bearing the corpse with all its trappings shoulder high to the funeral pyre for burial do ye as custom bids salute the dead on her last journey starting

Ch Look! I see thy father advancing with aged step and servants too bearing in their arms adornment for thy wife offerings for the dead

Enter PHERES.

Pheres My son I come to share thy sorrow for thou hast lost a noble peerless wife that no man will deny Yet must thou needs bear this blow hard though it be Accept this garniture and let it go beneath the earth for rightly is her body honoured since she died to save thy life my son and gave me back my child suffering me not to lose thee and pine away in an old age of sorrow Thus by the generous deed she dared hath she made her life a noble example for all her sex Farewell to thee who hast saved this son of mine and raised me up when falling be thine a happy lot even in Hades halls! Such marriages I declare are gain to man else to wed is not worth while

Ad Thou hast come uncalled by me to this burial nor do I count thy presence as a friendly act. Never shall she be clad in any garniture of thine nor in her burial will she need aught of thine Thou shouldst have shewn thy sympathy at the time my doom was sealed But thou didst stand aloof and let another die though thou wert old the victim young shalt thou then mourn the dead? Methinks thou wert no real sire of mine nor was she my true mother who calls herself and is called so but I was sprung of slave s blood and privily substituted at thy wife s breast Brought to the test thou hast shewn thy nature I cannot think I am thy child by birth

By heaven thou art the very pattern of cowards who at thy age on the borderland of life wouldst not nay! couldst not find the heart to die for thy own son but ye my parents left to this stranger whom I henceforth shall justly hold even as mother and as father too and none but her And yet twas a noble exploit to achieve to die to save thy son and in any case the remnant of thy time to live was but short and I and she would have lived the days that were to be nor had I lost my wife and mourned my evil fate Moreover thou hast had all treatment that a happy man should have in princely pomp thy youth was spent thou hadst a son myself to be the heir of this thy home so thou hadst no fear of dying childless and leaving thy house desolate for strangers to pillage Nor yet canst thou say I did dishonour thy old age and give thee up to die seeing I have ever been to thee most dutiful and for this thou my sire and she my mother have made me this return Go then get other sons to tend thy closing years prepare thy body for the grave and lay out thy corpse For I will never bury thee with hand of mine for I am dead for all thou didst for me but if I found a saviour in another and still live his son I say I am and his fond nurse in old age will be Tis vain I see the old man s prayer for death his plaints at age and life s long weariness For if death do but draw near not one doth wish to die old age no more they count so burdensome.

Ch. Peac ! no h the present sorrow O my son goad not thy father s soul to fury

Fa. Child whom think st thou art evil ng? some Lydian or Phrygian bought with thy mone ? Art not aware I am a freeborn Thessalian son of a Thessalian sire? Thou art too insolent yet from hence thou halt not g as thou came t after shooting out thy br ..art tongue at m To rule my house I begat and bred thee up I own no d bt of dying in thy stead th is not the law that I recei ed f om my ancestor that fathers should die for children n r is it ustom in Hella For weal or woe thy life must be thine own wh te er was due from me to thee thou hast Dom on wide is thine and acres broad I will leave t thee f r from my father did I inherit them How pray have I wronged thee? of what am I robbi g thee? D e not thou for me nor I for thee. Th joy s in the li ht think st thou thy sire s is not? By Hea enl t a weary while I trow that time beneath the earth and life thou h short sweet Thou at lea t did t stru gle hard to scape thy death lost to shame and by her death dost live beyond thy dest ned t rm Dost thou then speak f cowardice in me thou cra en heart! no mat h for thy w fe, who hath d ed for thee her fine young lord A clever sch me ha t thou de ised to sta off death for e er f th i canst persuade each new w fe to die instead of thee and dost thou then taunt thy friends, who will not do the like coward as thou art thyself? Hold thy peac r flect f thou dost love thy life so well, this lo e by all is shared yet if thou wilt speak ill of me thyself halt hear a full and truthful li t of thy own crimes.

Ch. Too lon that list both now and her tofore cease fathe to revile thy son

Ad Say on, for I have said my say but if it vexes thee t hear the truth thou shouldst not have sinned again t me

Ph My sin had been the deeper had I died for thee

Ad What! is it all on for young or old to die?

Ph T h e one lif not twain is all our due

Ad Outli then Zeus himself!

Ph Dost curse thy parents, thou h unharmed by them?

Ad Yea for I see thy heart s set on length of da s.

Ph I t not to sa thyself thou art carryi g to th tomb this corpse

Ad A proof f th cowa d ce tho craven hea t!

Ph At any rat h death wa not due t m this thou can t not say

Ad Ah! mayst thou some d y come t n ed my aid!

Ph Woo ma y wi es, that there may be th more to die

Ad That is thy proach for thou did t efuse to die

Ph. Dear is the light f the sun god dear to all.

Ad. A coward soul is thine not to be reckoned among men.

Ph No laugh ng now for thee at bearing forth my a ed corpse

Ad Thy death w ll surely be a death of shame come when it will

Ph Once dea I l little reck of foul report.

Ad Alas! ho void of shame the old can be!

Ph Hers was no want of shame twas want of sense in her that thou didst find

Ad Be one! and lea e me to bury my dead

Ph I go bury thy victim thyself her murderer Her kinsmen yet will call for an account Else surely has Acastus ceased to be a man if he avenge not on thee his sister s blood

Ad Perdition seize thee and that wife of thine! grow old as ye deserve childless, though your son yet li es, for y shall ne er ent r the same abode with me nay! we e it needful I should d sown thy pat rnal hearth by herald voice I had disowned it (*Exit* PHERES) Now since we must bear our present woe let us go and lay the dead upon the pyre *Exit* ADMETUS

Ch Woe woe for thee! Alas, for thy hard hood! Noble spirit good beyond compare farewell! May Hermes in the nether world and Hades, too give thee a kindly welcome! and if even in that other life the good are re arded mayst thou have thy share therein and take thy seat by Hades bride! *Exit* CHORUS.

Enter ATTENDANT

Attendant Many the guests ere now from e ery corner f th wo ld I have seen come to the halls of Admetus, for whom I ha e spread the board but ne er yet have I welcomed to this hearth a guest so shameless as this a man who, in th first place, though h saw my master s grief, yet ente ed and p esumed to pass the gates, then took what cheer we had in no sober spirit th ou h he k ew our sor row n ' was ther au ht we failed to brin ? he called for it Next in h s hands he took a g blet of i y wood and dra k the pure ju ce of the black grape till the mou t ng fumes of wine heated him and he crowned his head with myrtl sprays, howl ing d scordantly while two-fold strains were there to hear f r he would sing w thout a thought for the tr ubles in Admetus halls while we ser ants mourned our mistress, though we did not let the stranger see our streami g eyes, for such was the bidding of Adm tus. So now here am I ent rt ining as guest some miscrea t thi f may be or robber while sh is gone fo th from th house, nor d d I f llow h r n r st et h my hand t ward her bier in mourning f r my lady who, to m a d all her servants, was m th r for she w uld save us from c u tless trouble appea ing her husband s angry mood Ha e I not good cause then to loathe this guest who cometh in our hour of woe?

Enter HERACLES.

He Ho! sirrah why that solemn thoughtful look? 'Tis n t the way for serv nts to scowl on guests, b it with courteous soul to welc me them. But thou, seeing a friend f th master arri e recei est him with sullen lowerin brow thou h tis but a stranger

He A guest is a burden to sorrowing friends if come he should

Ad The dead are dead Come in

He To feast in a friend s house of sorrow is shameful

Ad The guest chambers lie apart whereto we will conduct thee

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Ch Why then didst thou conceal thy present misfortune if as thy own lips declare it was a friend that came?

Ad He would never have entered my house had he known aught of my distress Maybe there are those who think me but a fool for acting thus and these will blame me but my halls have never learnt to drive away or treat with scorn my guests

Ch *O home of hospitality thrown open by thy* lord to all now and ever! In thee it was that Pythian Apollo the sweet harper deigned to make his home and in thy halls was content to lead a shepherd s life piping o er the sloping downs shepherd s madrigals to thy flocks And spotted lynxes couched amid his sheep in joy to hear his melody and the lions tawny *troop left the glen of Othrys and came* came too the dappled fawn on nimble foot from beyond the crested pines and frisked about thy lyre O Phœbus for very joy at thy gladsome minstrelsy And so it is thy lord inhabits a home rich in countless flocks by Bœbe s lovely mere bounding his tilled corn land and his level pastures with the clime of the Molossi near the sun s dark stable and holding sway as far as the harbourless strand of the Ægean neath Pelion s shadow Now too hath he opened wide his house and welcomed a guest although his eye is wet with tears in mourning for his wife so dear but lately dead within his halls yea for noble birth to noble feeling is inclined And in the good completest wisdom dwells and at my heart sits the bold belief that heaven s servant will be blessed

Ad Men of Pheræ kindly gathered here lo! even now my servants are bearing the corpse with all its trappings shoulder high to the funeral pyre for burial do ye as custom bids salute the dead on her last journey starting

Ch Look! I see thy father advancing with aged step and servants too bearing in their arms adornment for thy wife offerings for the dead

Enter PHERES

Pheres My son I come to share thy sorrow for thou hast lost a noble peerless wife that no man will deny Yet must thou needs bear this blow hard though it be Accept this garniture and let it go beneath the earth for rightly is her body honoured since she died to save thy life my son and gave me back my child suffering me not to lose thee and pine away in an old age of sorrow Thus by the generous deed she dared hath she made her life a noble example for all her sex Farewell to thee who hast saved this son of mine and raised me up when falling be thine a happy lot even in Hades halls! Such marriages I declare are gain to man else to wed is not worth while

Ad Thou hast come uncalled by me to this burial nor do I count thy presence as a friendly act Never shall she be clad in any garniture of thine nor in her burial will she need aught of thine Thou shouldst have shewn thy sympathy at the time my doom was sealed But thou didst stand aloof and let another die though thou wert old the victim young shalt thou then mourn the dead? Methinks thou wert no real sire of mine nor was she my true mother who calls herself and is called so but I was sprung of slave s blood and privily substituted at thy wife s breast Brought to the test thou hast shewn thy nature I cannot think I am thy child by birth

By heaven thou art the very pattern of cowards, who at thy age on the borderland of life wouldst not nay! couldst not find the heart to die for thy *own son but ye my parents left to this stranger* whom I henceforth shall justly hold e en as mother and as father too and none but her And yet twas a noble exploit to achieve to die to save thy son and in any case the remnant of thy time to live was but short and I and she would have lived the days that were to be nor had I lost my wife and mourned my evil fate *Moreover thou hast had all treatment* that a happy man should have in princely pomp thy youth was spent thou hadst a son myself to be the heir of this thy home so thou hadst no fear of dying childless and leaving thy house desolate for strangers to pillage Nor yet canst thou say I did dishonour thy old age and give thee up to die seeing I have ever been to thee most dutiful and for this thou my sire and she my mother have made me this return Go then get other sons to tend thy closing years prepare thy body for the grave and lay out thy corpse For I will never bury thee with hand of mine for I am dead for all thou didst for me but if I found a saviour in another and still live his son I say *I am* and his fond nurse *in old age* will be Tis vain I see the old man s prayer for death his plaints at age and life s long weariness. For if death do but draw near not one doth wish to die old age no more they count so burdensome.

death's ravages is too much to bear when one might go through life without wife or child.

Ch. A fate we cannot cope with is come upon us.

Ad. Woe is me!

Ch. But thou to sorrow settest no limit.

Ad. Ah! ah!

Ch. 'Tis hard to bear but still—

Ad. Woe is me!

Ch. Thou art not the first to lose—

Ad. Oh! woe is me!

Ch. A wife; misfortune takes a different shape for every man she plagues.

Ad. O the weary sorrow! O the grief for dear ones dead and gone! Why didst thou hinder me from plunging into the gaping grave, there to lay me down and die with her, my peerless bride? Then would Hades for that one have gotten these two faithful souls at once, crossing the nether lake together.

Ch. I had a kinsman once, within whose home died his only son, worthy of a father's tears; yet in spite of that he bore his grief resignedly, childless though he was, his hair already turning grey, himself far on in years, upon life's downward track.

Ad. O house of mine, how can I enter thee? how can I live here, now that fortune turns against me? Ah me! How wide the gulf 'twixt then and now! Then with torches cut from Pelian pines, with marriage hymns I entered in, holding my dear wife's hand; and at our back a crowd of friends with cheerful cries, singing the happy lot of my dead wife and me, calling us a noble pair made one, children both of highborn lineage; but now the voice of woe instead of wedding hymns, and robes of black instead of snowy white usher me into my house to my deserted couch.

Ch. Hard upon prosperous fortune came this sorrow to thee, a stranger to adversity; yet hast thou saved thy soul alive. Thy wife is dead and gone; her love she leaves with thee. What new thing is here? Death ere now from many a man hath torn a wife.

Ad. My friends, I count my dead wife's lot more blest than mine, for all it seems not so; for never more can sorrow touch her for ever; all her toil is over, and glorious is her fame. While I, who had no right to live, have passed the bounds of fate only to live a life of misery; I know it now. For how shall I endure to enter this my house? Whom shall I address, by whom be greeted back, to find delight in entering it? Whither shall I turn? Within the desolation will drive me forth, whensoever I see my widowed couch, the seat whereon she sat, the floor all dust within the house, and my babes falling at my knees with piteous tears for their mother, while the servants mourn the good mistress their house hath lost. These are the sorrows in my home; while abroad the marriages mong Thessalian and the thronging crowd of women will drive me mad[1] for I cannot bear to gaze upon the compeers of my wife. And whoso is my foe will taunt me thus, Behold him living in his shame, a wretch who quailed at death himself, but of his coward heart gave up his wedded wife instead, and escaped from Hades; doth he deem himself a man after that? And he loathes his parents, though himself refused to die." Such ill report shall I to my evils add. What profit then, my friends, for me to live, in fame and fortune ruined?

Ch. Myself have traced the Muses' path, have soared amid the stars, have laid my hold on many a theme, and yet have found naught stronger than necessity; no spell inscribed on Thracian tablets written there by Orpheus, the sweet singer, no! nor aught among the simples culled by Phoebus for the toiling race of men and given to Asclepius' sons. The only goddess she, whose altar or whose image man cannot approach; heeds not victims she; heed thou not, O come not to me, dread goddess, in greater might than heretofore in my career. Even Zeus requires thy aid to bring to pass whatso he wills. Thou too it is that by sheer force dost bend the steel among the Chalybes; nor is there any pity in thy relentless nature.

This is the goddess that hath gripped *thee too in* chains thou canst not 'scape; yet steel thy heart, for all thy weeping ne'er will bring to light again the dead from the *realms below*. Even sons of gods perish in darkness in the hour of death. We loved her while she was with us, we love her still though dead; noblest of *her sex was she*, the wife thou tookest to thy bed. Her tomb let none regard as the graves of those who die and are no more, but let her have honours equal with *the gods*, revered by every traveller; *and many a one will cross the road* and read this verse aloud, *"This is she that died in days gone* by to save her lord; now is she a spirit blest. Hail, lady revered, be kind *to us!"* Such glad greeting shall she have. But I see Admetus! *yonder I believe* comes Alcmena's son toward thy hearth.

Enter HERACLES *with a veiled woman*

H. Admetus, to a friend we should speak freely, *not hold our peace and harbour in our hearts complaints. I came to thee in thy hour* of sorrow and claimed the right to prove myself thy friend; but *thou wouldst not tell* me that he thy wife lay stretched in death, but didst make me a welcome guest *in thy* halls, as though thy whole concern was centred *on a stranger's* loss. So I crowned my head and poured drink-offerings to the gods in that thy house of sorrow. Wherefore I do blame thee for this treatment of me, yet would not grieve thee in thy trouble. So now the reason I have turned my steps and come hither again I will tell. This lady take and keep for me until I come bringing hither the steeds of Thrace, after I have slain the lord of the Bistones. But should I fare as fain I would not, I give her thee to serve within thy hall. *With no small toil* she came into my hands. 'Twas thus I found folk just appointing an open contest for athletes, well worth a struggle, and thence I *won* her as a prize and brought her thence; *now* those who were successful in the lighter contests had horses for their prize, but

[1] Or "drive me away".

that is the object of thy mourning Come hither that thou too mayst learn more wisdom Dost know *the nature of this mortal state? I trow not* how shouldst thou? Well lend an ear to me Death is the common debt of man no mortal really knows if he will live to see the morrow s light for Fortune s issues are not in our ken beyond the teacher s rule they lie no art can master them Hearken then to this and learn of me be merry drink thy cup and count the present day thine own the rest to Fortune yield And to Cypris too sweetest of the gods by far to man thy tribute pay for kindly is her mood Let be those other cares and heed my counsel if thou think st I speak aright methinks I do Come banish this excessive grief and drink a cup with me when *thou hast* passed beyond these doors and wreathed thy brow and I feel sure the plash of wine within the cup will bring thee to a better haven from this crabbed mood this cabined state of mind *Mortals we are and mortals thoughts* should have for all they who frown and scowl do miss—leastways I think so—the true life and get themselves misfortune

At I know all that but our present state has little claim on revelry or laughter

He The dead was a stranger woman grieve not to excess for the rulers of thy house are living

At How living? Thou knowest not the trouble in the house

He I do unless thy master did in aught deceive me

At Too hospitable is he

He Was I *to miss good cheer because a stranger* had died?

At A stranger surely! quite a stranger she!

He Is there some trouble that he withheld from me?

At Farewell go thy way! my master s troubles are my care

He This word of thine heralds not a grief for strangers f lt

At Had it been the sight of thy merriment had not grieved me so

He Can it be mine host hath strangely wronged me?

At Thou camest at no proper time for our house to welcome thee for sorrow is come upon us lo! thou seest our shorn heads and robes of sable hue

He Who is it that is dead? Is it a child or his aged sire that hath passed away?

At Nay sir guest tis Admetus wife that is no more

He What sayest thou? and did ye then in spite *of that admit me to your cheer?*

At Yes for his regard would not let him send thee from his door

He Unhappy husband what a wife hast thou lost!

At We are all undone not she alone

He I knew it when I saw his streaming eye shorn head and downcast look yet did he persuade me saying it was a stranger he was bearing to burial So I did constrain myself and passed his gates and sat drinking in his hospitable halls when he was suffering thus And have I wreathed my head and do I revel still? But—*thou to hold thy peace when* such a crushing sorrow lay upon the house! Where *is he burying her? Whither shall I go to find her?*

At Beside the road that leadeth straight to Larissa shalt thou see her carved tomb outside the suburb

Exit

He O heart O soul both sufferers oft now show the mettle of that son Tirynthian Alcmena daughter of Electryon bare to Zeus For I must save this woman dead but now setting Alcestis once again within this house and to Admetus this kind service render So I will go and watch for Death the black robed monarch of the dead and him methinks I shall find as he drinks of the blood offering near the tomb And if from ambush rushing once I catch *and fold him in my arms embrace none shall ever* wrest him thence with smarting ribs ere he give up the woman unto me But should I fail to find my prey and he come not to the clotted blood I will go to the sunless home of those beneath the earth to Persephone and her king and make to them my prayer sure that I shall bring Alcestis up again to place her in the hands of him my host who welcomed me to his house nor drove me thence though fortune smote him hard but this his noble spirit strove to hide out of regard for me What host more kind than him in Thessaly? or in the homes of Hellas? Wherefore shall he never say his generous deeds *were lavished on a worthless wretch* *Exit*

Enter ADMETUS *and* CHORUS

Ad Ah me! I loathe this entering in and loathe to see my widowed home Woe woe is me! Whither shall I go? Where stand? what say? or what suppress? Would God that I were dead! Surely in an evil hour my mother gave me birth The dead I envy and would fain be as they and long to dwell within their courts No joy to me to see the light no joy *to tread the earth such a hostage death hath* reft me of and handed o er to Hades

Ch Move forward go within the shelter of thy house

Ad Woe is me!

Ch Thy sufferings claim these cries of woe

Ad Ah me!

Ch Through anguish hast thou gone full well I know

Ad Alas! alas!

Ch Thou wilt not help the dead one whit

Ad O misery!

Ch Nevermore to see thy dear wife face to face is grief indeed

Ad Thy words have probed the sore place in my heart What greater grief can come to man than the loss of a faithful wife? Would I had never married or shared with her my home! I envy those mongst men who have nor wife nor child *Theirs is but one* life to grieve for that is no excessive burden but to see children fall ill and bridal beds emptied by

haply to thy gaze she ha e a semblance of thy w f nd now that thou art blest cease fr m sor row

Ad Great gods, what shall I say? a marv l past all hope is here! M w f m own true wif I see or is som mocking rapture sent by hea en to drive me mad

He No, no us thy own wife thou seest here

Ad Beware it be not a phantom fr m that n the orld

H No necroman er was th s guest whom thou did t elcome

A Do I behold my w fe her wh m I bur ed?

H Be well assu ed the of st ll I marvel not thou dost d tru t th luck

Ad Ma I touch her may I speak to h r as my l ing wif ?

H Speak t he For thou hast all thy heart s des

Ad O form and features of m well l ed wife! pa t all hope I hold thee ne er expecting to see thee ain

He So thou dost may no jealous god rise aga n t thee!

Ad O noble son f alm hty Zeus, good l ck to thee! may the fath that begat thee hold thee in h keeping fo thou and no else hast raised my fallen f tunes. How d d t th u bring h r from the world below t th l ht of day?

He By encount rin the god who had her in his po er

Ad Wher d dst thou enga e with Death? tell me this.

He Just b the tomb I from m amb sh spran and cau ht h m in my grip

Ad But wh thu speechless stand m wife?

He 'Tis not lawful et fo thee to hear her speak re she be purified from the gods below and the th r l day be come So lead her in and hereafter e en as o y be just nd kind to guests, Admetus Now farew ell! for I mu t go to perform my appointed task f r the lordly son of Sthenelus

Ad Ab de with us and be our welcome g est

He Another t me now mu t I use all haste

Ad Good lu k to thee! and mayst thou come aga n! (*Exit* HER CLES) To the cit zens and all my realm I make this proclamat on that they in titute d nces n honour of the glad event and make the altars steam w th sac fice and offer prayers for ow ha e I moo ed my ba k of life in a happ e ha en tha befo e and so will own myself a happy man

Ch Many a e the hapes that fortune takes, and oft the gods brin th es to pass beyond our expec t t on That which we deemed so sure is not ful filled while f r that we never thou ht wo ld be God finds out a way And s ch hath been the issue in the present case *Exe nt o* NES

those who conquered in severer feats in boxing and wrestling won herds of oxen and this woman was to be added thereto with such a chance twere shame indeed to pass so fair a guerdon by So thou must take her in thy charge as I said for not by theft but honest toil I won the prize I bring and maybe e en thou in time wilt thank me

Ad Twas not because of any slight or unkind thought of thee that I concealed my wife s sad fate but this were adding grief to grief if thou hadst gone from hence to the halls of some other friend and it sufficed that I should mourn my sorrow But I do beseech thee prince if tis possible bid some other Thessalian one who hath not suffered as I have keep the maiden for thee—and thou hast many friends in Pheræ remind me not of my misfortune For I could not see her in my house and stay my tears Oh! add not new affliction to my stricken heart for sure by sorrow am I bowed enough And where within my halls could a tender maiden live? for such she is as her dress and vesture show Is she to dwell where men consort? Then how shall she retain her maiden purity if mid our youths she come and go? O Heracles it is no easy task to check a young man s fancy and I am anxious for thy sake Or am I to take her to my dead wife s bower and care for her? How can I bring her there to fill the other s bed? Twofold reproach I fear first some fellow townsman may taunt me with betraying my benefactress in eagerness to wed a new young bride next there is my dead wife whom I should much regard for she doth merit all my reverence Thou too lady whosoe er thou art believe me art the very counterfeit presentment of Alcestis the picture of her form ah me! O take this maiden I conjure thee from my sight slay me not already slain For in her I seem once more to see my wife and my heart is darkly troubled and the fountains of my eyes are loosed Ah woe is me! Now do I taste the bitterness of this my grief

Ch Indeed I cannot call thy fortune blest yet heaven s gift must thou endure whoe er the god that comes to bring it

He Would I had the power to bring thy wife up to the light from the halls of death and confer this kindness on thee!

Ad Right well I know thou wouldst But what of that? The dead can never come to life again

He Do not exceed the mark but bear thy grief with moderation

Ad 'Tis easier to advise than to suffer and endure

He Yet what thy gain if thou for aye wilt mourn

Ad I too know that myself but some strange yearning leads me on

He Love for the dead compels a tear

Ad Her death was mine more than any words of mine can tell

He Thou hast lost a noble wife who shall gainsay it?

Ad Life henceforth hath lost all charm for me

He Time will soothe the smart as yet thy grief is young

Ad Time! Use that word if death and time are one

He A new wife and a longing for a fresh marriage will stay thy sorrow

Ad Peace! What words are thine? I ne er of thee had thought it

He What! wilt never wed but preserve thy widowed state?

Ad There is no woman living that shall share my couch

He Dost think that this will help the dead at all?

Ad My reverence she deserves where er she is

He I praise thee yes but still thou bringest on thyself the charge of folly

Ad So that thou never call st me bridegroom praise me if thou wilt

He I praise thee for thy loyalty to thy wife

Ad Come death! if ever I betray her dead though h she be

He Well take this maiden to the sh lter of thy noble house

Ad Spare me I entreat thee by Zeus thy sire

He Be sure if thou refuse twill be a sad mistake

Ad If I comply remorse will gnaw my heart

He Yield for in god s good time maybe thou wilt give me thanks

Ad Ah! would thou hadst never won her in the games!

He Yet thou too sharest in my victory

Ad True still let this maiden go away

He Go she shall if go she must but first see if this is needful

Ad I needs must else wilt thou be wroth with me

He I have a reason good to press the matter thus

Ad Have thy way then Yet know well thy deed I disapprove

He A day will come that thou wilt praise me only yield

Ad (*To his servants*) Take her in if I needs must give her welcome in my house

He To thy servants will I not hand her over

Ad Conduct her then thyself within if so thou thinkest good

He Nay but into thy hands shall mine consign her

Ad I will not touch her though she is free to go within my halls

He To thy hand and thine alone I her entrust

Ad Prince against my will thou dost constrain me to this deed

He Boldly stretch out thy hand and touch th stranger maid

Ad There then I stretch it out as toward the Gorgon s severed head

He Hast hold of her?

Ad I have

He (*Removes the veil*) So keep her safely then and in days to come thou wilt confess the son of Zeus proved himself a noble guest Look well at her

left Euboea's cliffs, and with the oar that sweeps the sea, put in here from across the firth?

I. Sea, no island life I lead, but from Mycenae to this land I come.

Ch. What do they call thee, aged sir, those folk in Mycenae?

Io. Maybe ye have heard of Iolaus, the comrade of Heracles, for he was not unknown to fame.

Ch. Yea, I have heard of him in bygone days; but tell me whose are the tender boys thou bearest in thine arms?

Io. These sirs, are the sons of Heracles, come as suppliants to you and your city.

Ch. What is their quest? Are they anxious, tell me, to obtain an audience of the state?

I. That so they may escape surrender, nor be torn with violence from thy altars, and brought to Argos.

Co. Nay, this will nowise satisfy thy masters, who over thee have a right, and so have tracked thee hither.

Ch. Stranger, 'tis but right we should reverence the gods' suppliants, suffering none with violent hand to make them leave the altars, for that will dread Justice never permit.

Co. Do thou then drive these subjects of Eurystheus forth, and this hand of mine shall abstain from violence.

Ch. 'Twere impious for the state to neglect the suppliant stranger's prayer.

Co. Yet 'tis well to keep clear of troubles, by adopting that counsel, which is the wiser.

Ch. Thou then shouldst have told the monarch of this land thy errand before being so bold, out of regard to his country's freedom, instead of trying to drag strangers by force from the altars of the gods.

Co. Who is monarch of this land and state?

Ch. Demophon, son of gallant Theseus.

Co. Surely it were most to the purpose to discuss this matter somewhat with him; all else has been said in vain.

Ch. Lo! here he comes in person, in hot haste, and Acamas his brother, to hear what thou hast to say.

Enter DEMOPHON *and* ACAMAS.

Demophon. Since thou for all thy years hast outstripped younger men in coming to the rescue to this altar of Zeus, do thou tell me what hath chanced to bring this crowd together.

Ch. There sit the sons of Heracles as suppliants, having wreathed the altar, as thou seest, O king, and with them is Iolaus, trusty comrade of their sire.

De. Why should this event have called for cries of pain?

Ch. (*Turning to* COPREUS.) This fellow caused the uproar by trying to drag them forcibly from this altar, and he tripped up the old man, till my tears for pity flowed.

De. Hellenic dress and fashion in his robes doth he no doubt adopt, but deeds like these betray the barbarian. Thou, sirrah, tell me straight thy country whence thou camest hither.

Co. An Argive I; since that thou seekest to know. Who sent me and the object of my coming, will I freely tell. Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, sends me hither to fetch these back; and I have come, sir stranger, with just grounds in plenty alike for speech or action. An Argive myself, Argives I come to fetch, taking with me these runaways from my native city, on whom the doom of death was passed by our laws there; and we have a right, since we rule our city independently, to ratify its sentences. And though they have come as suppliants to the altars of numerous others, we have taken our stand on these same arguments, and no one has ventured to bring upon himself evils of his own getting. But they have come hither, either because they perceived some folly in thee, or in their perplexity staking all on one risky throw to win or lose; for surely they do not suppose that thou, if so thou hast thy senses still, and only thou, in all the breadth of Hellas they have traversed, wilt pity their foolish troubles. Come now, put argument against argument; what will be thy gain, suppose thou admit them to thy land, or let us take them hence? From us these benefits are thine to win; this city can secure as friend Argos, with its far-reaching arm, and Eurystheus' might complete; whilst if thou lend an ear to their piteous pleading and grow soft, the matter must result in trial of arms; for be sure we shall not yield this struggle without appealing to the sword. What pretext wilt thou urge? Of what domains art thou robbed that thou shouldst take and wage war with the Tirynthian Argives? What kind of allies art thou aiding? For whom will they have fallen whom thou buriest? Surely thou wilt get an evil name from the citizens, if for the sake of an old man with one foot in the grave, a mere shadow I may say, and for these children, thou wilt plunge into troublous waters. The best thou canst say is, that thou wilt find in them hope, and nothing more; and yet this falls far short of the present need; for these would be but a poor match for Argives even when full armed and in their prime, if haply this raises thy spirits; moreover the time 'twixt now and then is long, wherein ye may be blotted out. Nay, hearken to me; give me naught, but let me take mine own, and so gain Mycenae; but forbear to act now, as is your Athenian way, and take the weaker side, when it is in thy power to choose the stronger as thy friends.

Ch. Who can decide a cause or ascertain its merits, till from both sides he clearly learn what they would say?

I. O king, in thy land I start with this advantage, the right to hear and speak in turn, and none ere that will drive me hence as elsewhere they would. 'Twixt us and him is naught in common, for we no longer have aught to do with Argos since that decree was passed, but we are exiles from our native land; how then can he justly drag us back as subjects of Mycenae, seeing that they have banished us? For we are strangers. Or do ye claim that every exile from Argos is exiled from the bounds of Hellas?

HERACLEIDÆ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Iolaus, Servant *of Hyllus*
Copreus, Alcmena
Demophon, Messenger
Macaria, Eurystheus
Chorus of Aged Athenians

Before the altar of Zeus at Marathon Enter iolaus *with the children of Heracles*

Iolaus I hold this true and long have held Na*ture hath made one man upright for his neighbours* good while another hath a disposition wholly given over to gain useless alike to the state and difficult to have dealings with but for himself the best of men and this I know *not from mere hearsay I for* instance from pure regard and reverence for my kith and kin though I might have lived at peace in Argos alone of all my race shared with Heracles his labours while he was yet with us and now that he dwells in heaven I keep these his children safe be neath my wing though myself I need protection For when their father passed from earth away Eu rystheus would first of all have slain us but we es caped And though our home is lost our life was saved But in exile we wander from city to city ever forced to roam For added to our former wrongs Eurystheus thought it fit to put this further outrage upon us wheresoe er he heard that we were settling thither would he send heralds demanding our sur render and driving us from thence holding out this threat that Argos is no mean city to make a friend or foe and furthermore pointing to his own pros perity So they seeing how weak my means and these little ones left without a father bow to his superior might and drive us from their land And I share *the exile of these children and help them* bear their evil lot by my sympathy loth to betray them lest someone say Look you! now that the children s sire is dead Iolaus no more protects them *kinsman though he is* Not one corner left us in the whole of Hellas we are come to Marathon and its neighbouring land and here we sit as suppliants at the altars of the gods and pray their aid for tis said two sons of Theseus dwell upon these plains the lot of their inheritance scions of Pandion s stock related to these children this the reason we have come on this our way to the borders of glorious Athens To lead the flight two aged guides are we my care is centred on these boys while she I mean Alcmena clasps her son s daughter in her arms and bears her for safety within this shrine for we shrink from letting tender maidens come anigh the crowd or stand as suppliants at *the altar* Now Hyllus and the elder of his brethren are seeking some place for us to find a refuge if we are driven by force from this land O children children come hither! hold unto my robe for lo! I see a herald coming towards us from Eurystheus by whom we are persecuted wanderers excluded from every land (*Enter* copreus) A curse on thee and him that sent thee hateful wretch! for that same tongue of thine hath oft an *nounced its master s evil hests to these children s* noble sire as well

Copreus Doubtless thy folly lets thee think this is a good position to have taken up and that thou *art come to a city that will help thee* No! there is none that will prefer thy feeble arm to the might of Eurystheus Begone! why take this trouble? Thou must arise and go to Argos where awaits thee death by stoning

Io Not so for the god s altar will protect me and this land of freedom wherein we have set foot

Co Wilt give me the trouble of laying hands on thee?

Io By force at least shalt thou never drag these children hence

Co That shalt thou soon learn it seems thou wert a poor prophet after all in this

copreus *here seizes the children*

Io This shall never happen whilst I live

Co Begone! for I will take them hence for all thy refusals for I hold that they belong to Eurystheus *as they do indeed*

Io Help ye who long have had your home in Athens! we suppliants at Zeus altar in your market place are being haled by force away our sacred wreaths defiled shame to your city to the gods dishonour

Enter chorus

Chorus Hark hark! What cry is this that rises near the altar? At once explain the nature of the trouble

Io See this aged frame hurled in its feebleness upon the ground! Woe is me!

Ch Who threw thee down thus pitiably?

Io Behold the man who flouts your gods kind sirs and tries by force to drag me from my seat be fore the altar of Zeus

Ch From what land old stranger art thou come to this confederate state of four cities? or have ye

his custom, to exa erate what happened twofold. Bethink thee hat a tale he will tell his master of dreadful treatment, how h came very near los n his l l together.

I Children ha no fairer prize than this th be born f a good and noble s and th power t wed from nobl families but whoso is en la ed by passion and makes a lowborn match, I cann t praise for lea to his children a legacy of shame to gratify himself. For noble birth offers a stouter resistance to ad ersity than base parentage w for instance, in the last extremity of woe have found friend and kinsmen here the onl champions f these leaders thou h all the len th and breadth of this Hellenic world. G e child n g e to them your hand nd they the same to ou draw near to them, th ildren, w ha mouet tral four friends, and if ever e see th path that lead ou ba k to your count land, and possess your home and the honours f your fath r ount them e er s our friend and sa iours and ne e l t m nst their land the foemen s pear in memor of th s, but hold this city first midst those ve lo e. Yea they well deserve your warm reward in that they ha e lifted from ou houlders to their own the enmity of so m hty a land a Ar os nd peo e, tho gh they saw we were vagabonds and beggars still they did not gi e us up nor driv us f rth. So hile I li e, nd af er death, come when it ill, loudly will I s t y praise, good friend and will extol thee as I stand at Theseus sid and cheer his heart I tell how thou didst gi kind welcome and protect tion to the sons f H racles, and how no ly thou dost preser th father s fa ne th ou h the length of Hellas, and hast not fallen from th high estate to hich th father brou ht thee a lot wh ch few others can boa t for mon t e mani st thou and one may be fa e t d er ta e from his sire.

Ch. This land is e er ead n an honest cause t aid the helpless. Wherefore er now t hath end red troubles numberless for friends, and now in this I see st uggle h t hand.

De. Thou ha t poken ll, and I feel confident their conduct will be such our kindness will they not forget. Now will I muster the c tizens and set them i array that I ma rece e M enae host with serr ed rank. P t first ill I send scouts t meet them, lest they fall upon m unawares for at Argos every man prompt t answer t th call, and I w ll semb prophets and ordain a sac fi e. But do thou lea th altar of Zeus and go with th children in o th house for ther are those who care f r ther even though I be b oad. Enter then my home old man.

I I will not lea th altar Let us sit here, stud, pra in for th c ty fair success, and when thou hast made g orious end of this strife, then will we go unto th house nor are th gods who champion us weaker tha the gods of Argos. O ka Hera, wife of Zeus, s their leader Athena ours. And this I say is an omen of success that we ha e the stron er deity f r Pallas will not brook defeat.

Exit DEMOPHON

Ch. Thou h loud thy boasts, there be others care no mo f r thee for that O stran, r from the land of Argos nor wilt thou scare my soul w th swelling words. N t yet be this the fate of mighty Athens, beauteous town! But thou art o l of sense and so he, who lords i o er Argos, th son of Sthenelus—thou that comest to another state in no wise weaker than Argos, and stra ger that thou art wouldst dra away by force suppliants of the gods wanderers that cling to my land for h lp refusing to yield to our kin not r t ha ing a y honest plea to urge How can such conduct count a honourable at lea t in wise men s judgment? I am for peace myself yet I tell thee wicked kin, although thou come unto my city thou halt not get so easily what thou expectest. Thou art not the onl man to wi ld a sword or tar with plates of brass. Nay thou eager war, rior I warn thee, b in not war s alarms gainst our lo ely town restrain thyself.

Re-enter DEMOPHON

I M son why prithee art thou returned with tr t anxious look? Ha t thou news f the enemy? A e they comin are they her or wh t th st sayest? For of surety n herald will not pla in false. No! su e I am their ca ta n prosperous here tofore will come with thoughts exceeding proud against Athens. But Zeus doth punish o erweening pride.

De. Th host of Argos is come, and Eurystheus its kin my own eyes saw him for the man who thinks he knows good generalship must see the foe no b messen ers alon As et, however h hath not se t his host into th plain, but cam ed upon a rocky brow is watching—I only t ll thee what I think this means—to see by wh h road to lead his army hithe w thout fi ht n and how to take up a safe position in th s land However al m plans ar by this tim ca full had the city s under arms, the v ctims stand eady to be slain to e ery god whose du this is m seers ha filled th town w th sacrifices, to turn th foe t flight and keep our country saf All those who chant prophetic word ha I assembled, and ha e examined ancient oracles, both pu blic and secret as means to sa e this c t And thou h th several answers differ in man points, y t n on is th sentiment of all clea ly the same th bid me sacri e to Dem ter s dau h er some maiden from a noble father sprung Now I thou h m your ca se I am as zealous as thou seest t will not slay my hild nor w ll I compel an of my subjects o do so against his will for who of his own will doth harbour such an e il thou ht a to ld with his own hands the child he loves? And now thou mayest se angry gatherings, where som declare tis ri ht to tand b s ppliant strangers, wh others charg me w h folly but if I do this deed, a civil war is then and there on foot. Do thou then look to this and help to find a way to save

[1]Or "let us keep our suppliant seat, awaiting the city's success."

Not from Athens surely for ne er will she for fear of Argos drive the children of Heracles from her land Here is no Trachis not at all no! nor that Achæan town whence thou defying justice but boasting of the might of Argos in the very words thou now art using didst drive the suppliants from their station at the altar If this shall be and they thy words approve why then I trow this is no more Athens the home of freedom Nay but I know the temper and nature of these citizens they would rather die for honour ranks before mere life with men of worth Enough of Athens! for excessive praise is apt to breed disgust and oft ere now I have myself felt vexed at praise that knows no bounds But to thee as ruler of this land I fain would show the reason why thou art bound to save these children Pittheus was the son of Pelops from him sprung Æthra and from her Theseus thy sire was born And now will I trace back these children s lineage for thee Heracles was son of Zeus and Alcmena Alcmena sprang from Pelops daughter therefore thy father and their father would be the sons of first cousins Thus then art thou to them related O Demophon but thy just debt to them beyond the ties of kinship do I now declare to thee for I assert in days gone by I was with Theseus on the ship as their father s squire when they went to fetch that girdle fraught with death yea and from Hades murky dungeons did Heracles bring thy father up as all Hellas doth attest Wherefore in return they crave this boon of thee that they be not surrendered up nor torn by force from the altars of thy gods and cast forth from the land For this were shame on thee and hurtful likewise in thy state should suppliants exiles kith and kin of thine be haled away by force For pity s sake! cast one glance at them I do entreat thee laying my suppliant bough upon thee by thy hands and beard slight not the sons of Heracles now that thou hast them in thy power to help Show thyself their kinsman and their friend be to them father brother lord for better each and all of these than to fall beneath the Argives hand

Ch O king I pity them hearing their sad lot Now more than ever do I see noble birth o ercome by fortune for these though sprung from a noble sire are suffering what they ne er deserved

De Three aspects of the case constrain me Iolaus not to spurn the guests thou bringest first and foremost there is Zeus at whose altar thou art seated with these tender children gathered round thee next come ties of kin and the debt I owe to treat them kindly for their father s sake and last mine honour which before all I must regard for if I permit this altar to be violently despoiled by stranger hands men will think the land I inhabit is free no more and that through fear I have surrendered suppliants to Argives and this comes nigh to make one hang oneself Would that thou hadst come under a luckier star! yet as it is fear not that any man shall tear thee and these children from the altar by force Get thee (*to* COPREUS) to Argos and tell Eurystheus so yea and more if he have any charge against these strangers he shall have justice but never shalt thou drag them hence

Co Not even if I have right upon my side and prove my case?

De How can it be right to drag the suppliant away by force?

Co Well mine is the disgrace no harm will come to thee

De Tis harm to me if I let them be haled away by thee

Co Banish them thyself and then will I take them from elsewhere

De Nature made thee a fool to think thou knowest better than the god

Co It seems then evildoers are to find a refuge here

De A temple of the gods is an asylum open to the world

Co May be they will not take this view in Mycenæ

De What! am I not lord of this domain?

Co So long as thou injure not the Argives and if wise thou wilt not

De Be injured for all I care provided I sin not against the gods

Co I would not have thee come to blows with Argos

De I am of like mind in this but I will not dismiss these from my protection

Co For all that I shall take and drag my own away

De Why then perhaps thou wilt find a difficulty in returning to Argos

Co That shall I soon find out by making the attempt

De Touch them and thou shalt rue it and that without delay

Ch I conjure thee never dare to strike a herald

De Strike I will unless that herald learn discretion

Ch Depart and thou O king touch him not

Co I go for its feeble fighting with a single arm But I will come again bringing hither a host of Argive troops spearmen clad in bronze for countless warriors are awaiting my return and king Eurystheus in person at their head anxiously he waits the issue here on the borders of Alcathous realm[1] And when he hears thy haughty answer he will burst upon thee and thy citizens on this land and all that grows therein for all in vain should we possess such hosts of picked young troops in Argos should we forbear to punish thee

Exit COPREUS

De Perdition seize thee! I am not afraid of thy Argos Be very sure thou shalt not drag these suppliants hence by force to my shame for I hold not this city subject unto Argos, but independently

Ch Tis time to use our forethought ere the host of Argos approach our frontier for exceeding fierce are the warriors of Mycenæ and in the present case still more than heretofore For all heralds observe

[1] Megara

will I propose a fairer method tis right to summon hith r all th sisters of this maiden and then let her on whom the lot shall fall d e for her family for that thou shouldst d e without the lot is not just.

Ms My death shall no chance lot decide there is no gr ciousness in that peacel old friend But if ye ac ept d will a ail you of my readiness, freely do I off r my life for these and without constra t.

Io Ah this is even nobler than thy former word that was matchless, but thou dost now surpass thy bra ery a d n ble speech I cannot bid will n t forbid thy dyin O my daughter! for by thy death thou dost thy broth s ser e.

Ms A cautious bidd g thine! Fear not to take a stain of guilt from me only let me d as one whose death is f ee. F llow me, old friend for in thy arms I fain would d e stand by and eil my body with my robe for I will go even to the d eadful doom of sacrifice seeing whose daughter I a ow myself

I I cannot stand by and see thee bleed

Ms At least d thou beg me this boon of the kin that I may breathe out my lif in women s arms instead f men

De It shall be so u happy maid for this were hame t me to r fuse thee honour due for many easons because thou hast a soul so bra e because tis ght and thou hast sh wn mo e c urage than a y of th sex my eyes ha er seen Now if thou hast u ht to say to these children or thy aged guide, h! say the last thou hast to say—then go

Exit

M Farewell ld fri d farewell! and prithee teach these child en to be like thyself wise at e ery point let them tr e n further f r that w ll suffice them And seek to sa e th m from death e n as thou art nxious to do thy hild en are we thy care t was that nurtured us. Thou seest how I yield my bridal bloom to d e f r them F r you my b oth rs gathered he e may y u be happy! and may ery blessing be yours, fo the whi h my blood shall pay the price! Honour this old fri d and he that is w thi th house, Al mena th ged moth r f my sire and these strangers too And I er hea n fo y u de ise release fr m trouble and a r turn to y r home emember th burial d to h that sa ed you a funeral fair as I deserve f r I ha not failed b t tood by y u and d ed t sa e my ra This hall be my pearl f price n tead of child en nd f the maiden lif I lea f there be really ht beyond the gra —God grant th re may not be! Fo f there, we who re to d e shall find a lif of care I kn w n t wh the ne hall turn for death h ld a so eign cure for e ry ll

I Maiden f he oi soul tr nsce d g ll thy rac be sur th fame that thou shalt win fr m us, lif in death hall lea e th rest of women far beh nd fa ewell to thee! I d not say harsh w rds f b t t wh m th u art de ted the goddess-da ghter f Dem t r (*Exit* MAC AR) Ch ld n I am nd e griefu n rves my limb take hold and support me to a seat hard by wh n ye ha drawn my mantle o er my face my sons For I am grieved at what hath happened a d yet were it not ful filled we could not li e thus were the misch ef worse, though this is grief enough

Ch W thout the w ll of hea en none is blest none curst I do maintain nor doth the same house for e er tread the path of bl ss for one kind of fortune follows hard upon another one man it brings to naught from his high estate another though of no account it crowns with happiness. To shun what fate decrees is no wise permitted none by cunning shall thrust it from him but he who ainly would do so shall have uncea ing trouble. Then fall not prostrate thou but bear what hea en sends and set a limit to thy soul s gr ef for she poor ma d! in dying for her brothers and this land hath won a glorious death and splend d fame shall be her meed from all mankind f r virtue s path leads through troublous ways Worthy of her father worthy of her noble b rth is this conduct And if thou dost honour the irtuous dead I share with thee that sentiment

Enter SERVANT

Servant All hail ye children! Where is a ed Iolaus? where the mother of your sire, absent from their place at th s altar?

Io He e am I so far as I can be p esent at all

Se Why dost thou lie there? Why that down cast look?

Io There is come a sorrow on my house whereby I am distressed

Se Arise lift up thy head

Io I am old a d all my strength is gone

Se But I come with tidin s of great joy for thee.

Io Who art th u? Where have I met thee? I have no remembrance

Se I am a assal of Hyllus dost not recognize me now?

Io Best of friends art thou come to save us twain from hurt?

Se Assuredly and moreo r thou art lucky in th pres nt ca e

Io Alcmena m ther of a noble son t thee I call! com fo th hear this welcome news For long has anguish caused thee inwardly to waste wondering if those who now are here, would ever come.

Enter ALCMENA

Alcmena What mean that shout that echoes throughout the house? H th ther com yet a her ald from Argos O Iolaus and is he treat ng thee with lence? Feeble s any strength of mine yet thus mu h let me tell thee, str n er never whilst I li e shalt thou dra them hence Should t thou c ted no m e l t m be thought the m ther of that hero. And if thou lay a finger on them thou w lt trug le to thy shame w th tw aged foes

Io Courage aged dame, fear not not from Argos is h ald c me w th hostile messages

Al Why then did t raise a ry fear s harbing r?

I I called thee t come to me in front of this temple

Al I kn w n t what t means who is this?

yourselves and this country without causing me to be slandered by the citizens For I am no despot like a barbarian monarch but provided I do what is just just will my treatment be

Ch Can it be that heaven forbids this city to help strangers when it hath the will and longing so to do?

Io My children we are even as those mariners who have escaped the storm s relentless rage and have the land almost within their reach but after all are driven back from shore by tempests to the deep again Even so we just as we reach the shore in seeming safety are being thrust back from this land Ah me! Why cruel hope didst thou then cheer my heart though thou didst not mean to make the boon complete? The king may well be pardoned if he will not slay his subjects children and with my treatment here I am content if indeed tis heaven s will I thus should fare still is my gratitude to thee in no wise lost Children I know not what to do for you Whither shall we turn? for what god s altar have we left uncrowned? to what fenced city have we failed to go? Ruin and surrender are our instant lot poor children! If I must die tis naught to me save that thereby I give those foes of mine some cause for joy But you children I lament and pity and that aged mother of your sire Alcmena Ah woe is thee for thy long span of life! and woe is me for all my idle toil! Twas after all our destined doom to fall into the hands of our hated foe and die a death of shame and misery But lend me thine aid thou knowest how for all hope of these children s safety has not yet left me Give me up instead of them to the Argives O king run no risk but let me save the children to love my life becomes me not let it pass Me will Eurystheus be most glad to take and treat despitefully as I was Heracles companion for the man is but a boor wherefore wise men ought to pray to get a wise man for their foe and not a proud senseless fool for so even if by fortune flouted one would meet with much consideration

Ch Old man blame not this city for though perhaps a gain to us yet would it be a foul reproach that we betrayed strangers

De A generous scheme is thine but impossible Tis not in quest of thee yon king comes marching hither what would Eurystheus gain by the death of one so old? Nay tis these children s blood he wants For there is danger to a foe in the youthful scions of a noble race whose memory dwells upon their father s wrongs all this Eurystheus must foresee But if thou hast any scheme besides that better suits the time be ready with it for since I heard that oracle I am at a loss and full of fear

Enter MACARIA

Macaria Sirs impute not boldness to me because I venture forth this shall be my first request for a woman s fairest crown is this to practise silence and discretion and abide at home in peace But when I heard thy lamentations Iolaus I came forth albeit I was not appointed to take the lead in my family Still in some sense am I fit to do so for these my brothers are my chiefest care and I fain would ask as touching myself whether some new trouble added to the former woes is gnawing at thy heart

Io My daughter tis nothing new that I should praise thee as I justly may above all the children of Heracles Our house seemed to be prospering when back it fell again into a hopeless state for the king declares the prophets signify that he must order the sacrifice not of bull or heifer but of some tender maid of noble lineage if we and this city are to exist Herein is our perplexity the king refuses either to sacrifice his own or any other s child Wherefore though he use not terms express yet doth he hint that unless we find some way out of this perplexity we must seek some other land for he this country fain would save

Ma Are these indeed the terms on which our safety depends?

Io Yea on these if that is we are successful otherwise

Ma No longer then cower before the hated Argive spear for I of my own free will or ever they bid me am ready to die and offer myself as a victim For what excuse have we if while this city deems it right to incur a great danger on our behalf we though we might save ourselves fly from death by foisting our trouble on others? No! indeed twere surely most ridiculous to sit and mourn as suppliants of the gods and show ourselves but cowards children as we are of that illustrious sire Where among the brave is such conduct seen? Better I suppose this city should be taken and I (which Heaven forefend!) fall into the hands of the enemy and then for all I am my noble father s child meet an awful doom and face the Death god none the less Shall I wander as an exile from this land? Shall I not feel shame then when someone says as say they will

Why are ye come hither with suppliant boughs loving your lives too well? Begone from our land! for we will not succour cowards Nay if these be slain and I alone be saved I have no hope in any wise of being happy though many ere now have in this hope betrayed their friends For who will care to wed a lonely maid or make me mother of his children? Tis better I should die than meet such treatment little as I merit it This were fitter treatment for some other one that is not born to fame as I am Conduct me to the scene of death crown me with garlands and begin the rites if so it please you then be victorious o er the foe for here I offer my life freely and without constraint and for my brothers and myself I undertake to die For I by loving not my life too well have found a treasure very fair a glorious means to leave it

Ch Ah what shall I say on hearing the maid s brave words she that is ready to die for her brothers? Who can speak more noble words or do more noble deeds henceforth for ever?

Io Daughter thou art his own true child no other man s but Heracles that godlike soul proud am I of thy words though I sorrow for thy lot Yet

will I propose a fairer method 'tis right t summon hither all th sisters of this maiden and then let her on whom the lot shall fall, die for her family for that thou shouldst die without the lot is not just.

Ma My death shall no chance lot decide there is no graciousness in tha peace! old friend But if e accept and will avail you of my readiness, freely do I offer my life for these and without con t aint

Io Ah, this is even nobler than thy form word that was matchless, but thou dost now surpass thy bravery and nobl speech. I cannot bid will not forbid thy d m O my daughter! fo by thy death thou dost th brothers serve.

Ma A cautious bidd g thine! Fear not to take a stain of guilt from me only let me d e as one whose death is free. Follow me old friend for in thy arms I fain would d stand by and veil my body with m robe for I will go even to the dreadful doom of sacrifice, seein whose da hter I a ow myself

I I cannot stand by and see thee bleed

Ma At least do thou be me this boon of the king, that I may b eathe out my lif in women's arms stead of men's.

De I shall be so, unhappy maid for this were shame to me to refuse thee honou due, f r many reasons because thou ha t a soul so br e because 'tis right and thou hast shown more courage than a of thy sex m ever ha e ever seen. Now if thou hast a 'ht to sa to these hildren or thy ged guid., oh! say the last thou hast to say—then go.

Exit

M Farewell, old friend farewell! and prithee teach these children to be like thyself, se at every poin let them strive no further for that will suffice them. And seek to sa them from death even as thou art anxious to do th children a e we thy care t was that n rtured us. Thou seest how I yield my bridal bloom to die for them For you my brothers gathered here may you be happy! and may every blessin be yours, for the which my blood shall pay the pri ! Honour this old friend and her that is within the house, Alcmena, th a ed mother f my sire, and these strangers too And f ever heaven for you devise elease from trouble and a return to your home remember the burial du- to her that sa ed you funeral fair as I deserve for I ha not failed b t stood by you and d ed to sa e th race. This shall be my pearl f price instead of children and for th maiden life I lea f there be really a ght beyond the gra e—God grant there may not be! For if en there, we who re t d e shall find a life of care I know not whither one shall turn for death is held a so ereign cure f every ill.

I Maiden of heroic soul, transcending all thy race be sure the fame that thou shalt win from us, in life in death, shall lea e the est of women fa behind fa ewell to thee I dare not say harsh words of h to whom th u rt de oted the goddess daughter of Demeter (*Exit* M c. A) Children I am undone grief unnerves my limbs take hold and support me to seat hard by when ye ha e drawn my mantle o er my face my sons. For I am grieved at what hath happened and yet were it not ful filled we could not live thus, were the misch ef worse, though this is grief enou h.

Ch Without the will of heaven none is blest none curst I do maintain nor doth the same house for e er tread the path of bliss for one kind of fortune follows hard upon another one man it brings to naught from his h gh estate another though of no account it crowns w th happiness. To shun what fate decrees, is no wise permitted none by cunning shall thrust it from him but he who vainly would do so, shall ha e unceasin trouble. Then fall not prostrate thou but bear what heaven sends, and set a limit to thy soul's gri f for she poor maid! in dying for her brothers and this land hath won a glorious death and splendid fame shall be her meed from all mankind for irtue's path leads through troublous ways. Worthy of her father worthy of her noble b rth is this conduct And if thou dost honour the virtuous dead I share with thee that sentiment

Enter SERVANT

Servant All hail, ye children! Where is aged Iolaus? wh re the mother of your sire absent from their place at this altar?

Io Here am I so far as I can be present at all

Se Why dost thou li there? Why that down cast look?

Io There is come a sorrow on my house whereby I am distressed

Se Arise lift up thy head

Io I am old and all my strength is gone

Se But I come with tidin s of great joy for thee.

Io Who art thou? Where ha e I met thee? I have no remembrance.

Se I am a vassal of H llus dost not recognise m now?

I Best of friends, art thou come to save us twain from hurt?

Se Assuredly and moreover thou art lucky in the present case.

Io Alcmena mother of a nobl son to thee I call com forth hear this welcome news. For long has anguish caused thee inwardly to waste wondering if those who now are here would ev r come.

Enter ALCMENA.

Alcmena What mean that shout that echoes throughout the house? H th there com yet a her ald from Argos O Iola s, and is he treating thee with iolence? Feeble is any stren th of mine yet thus much let me tell thee, stran er never whilst I li e shalt thou dra them hence Should t thou s ceed no more let me be thou ht th mother f that hero. And f thou lay a fin er on them thou wilt struggle to thy shame with two aged foes

I Courage, aged dame, fear not not from Argos is a herald come with hostil messa es.

Al. Why then didst raise a cry fear's harbin er?

I I called thee to come to m in front of this temp

Al. I know not what it means who is this?

Io A messenger who says thy grandson cometh hither

Al All hail to thee for these thy tidings! But why is he not here where is he? if in this land he hath set foot What hath happened to keep him from coming hither with thee to cheer my heart?

Se He is posting the army he brought with him and seeing it marshalled

Al Then have I no concern herein

Io Yes thou hast though it is my business to nquire into these matters

Se What then wouldst thou learn of these events?

Io About how many allies has he with him?

Se A numerous force I cannot otherwise describe the number

Io The leaders of the Athenians know this I suppose?

Se They do already is their left wing set in array

Io Is then the host already armed for battle?

Se Yea and already are the victims brought near the ranks

Io About what distance is the Argive host from us?

Se Near enough for their general to be plainly seen

Io What is he about? marshalling the enemy s line?

Se So we guessed we could not hear exactly But I must go for I would not that my master should engage the foe without m if I can help it

Io I also will go with thee for I like thee am minded so it seems to be there and help my friends

Se It least of all becomes thee thus to utter words of folly

Io Far less to shrink from sharing with my friends the stubborn fight

Se Mere looks can wound no one if the arm do naught

Io Why cannot I smite even through their shields?

Se Smite perhaps more likely be smitten thy self

Io No foe will dare to meet me face to face

Se Friend the strength that erst was thine is thine no more

Io Well at any rate I will fight with as many as ever I did

Se Small the weight thou canst throw into the balance for thy friends

Io Detain me not when I have girded myself for action

Se The power to act is thine no more the will maybe is there

Io Stay here I will not say what else thou wilt

Se How shalt thou show thyself before the troops unarmed?

Io There be captured arms within this shrine these will I use and if I live restore and if I am slain the god will not demand them of me back Go thou within and from its peg take down a suit of armour and forthwith bring it to me To linger thus at home is infamous while some go fight and others out of cowardice remain behind

Exit SERVANT

Ch Not yet hath time laid low thy spirit t s young as ever but thy body s strength is gone Why toil to no purpose? Twill do thee hurt and benefit our city little At thy age thou shouldst confess thy error and let impossibilities alone Thou canst in no way get thy vigour back again

Al What means this mad resolve to leave me with my children undefended here?

Io Men must fight and thou must look to them

Al And what if thou art slain? what safety shall I find?

Io Thy son s surviving children will care for thee

Al Suppose *they* meet with some reverse? which Heaven forefend!

Io These strangers will not give thee up fear not

Al They are my last and only hope I have no other

Io Zeus too I feel sure cares for thy sufferin s

Al Ah! of Zeus will I never speak ill but himself doth know whether he is just to me

Exit ALCMENA *Re enter* SERVANT

Se Lo! here thou seest a full coat of mail make haste to case thyself therein for the strife is ni h and bitterly doth Ares loathe loiterers but if thou fear the weight of the armour go for the present without it and in the ranks do on this gear mean time will I carry it

Io Well said! keep the harness ready to my hand put a spear within my grasp and support me on the left side guiding my steps

Se Am I to lead this warrior like a child?

Io To save the omen we must go without stumbling

Se Would thy power to act were equal to thy zeal!

Io Hasten I shall feel it grievously if I am too late for the battle

Se 'Tis thou who art slow not I though thou fanciest thou art doing wonders

Io Dost not mark how swift my steps are hasting?

Se I mark more seeming than reality in thy haste

Io Thou wilt tell a different tale when thou seest me there

Se What shall I see thee do? I wish thee all success at any rate

Io Thou shalt see me smite some foeman through the shield

Se Perhaps if ever we get there I have my fears of that

Io Ah! would to Heaven that thou mine arm even as I remember thee in thy lusty youth when with Heracles thou didst sack Sparta couldst so champion me to day! how I would put Eurystheus to flight! since he is too craven to wait the on slaught For prosperity carries with it this error too a reputation for bravery for we think the prosperous man a master of all knowledge *Exeunt*

Ch O earth and moon that shines by night and dazzling radiance of the god that giveth light to man bear the tidings to me shout aloud to heaven for joy and beside our ruler s throne and in the shrine of grey eyed Athene For my fatherland and

home will I soon decide the issue of the strife with the p aman sword because I have taken suppliants under m protection. Tis a fearful thing that a city prosperous as M cenæ is, one famed for martial prowess, should h bour wrath against my land st m countrymen, it were a shameful thin in st ried p suppliant strangers t the bidding of Argos. Zeus is on my sid I am not afraid Zeus hath a favour unto me as is my due never by me shall gods be thought weaker than mortal men. O dread goddess, thin the soil whereon we stand, thine this city for thou art its mother q een, and saviour therefore turn some other w y the impious king who leadeth a host from Argos with brand ished lance against this land for such my worth, I littl merit exile from my home For th worsh p is a e per formed th man a sa rifice nd never art thou forgotten as each month draweth to its close when youn voices s and dancers music is heard abroad while on our ind swept hill goes up the cry of joy t the beat of maiden feet b m ht

Enter servant and servant

Se Mistress, the messag that I brin is very short for thee to hear and fair for m who tand before thee to announce O er our foes we are vic torious, and trophies are bein set up w th pano plies upon them, taken from thy enemies.

A Best of friend this day hath wrought thy libert by reason f these tidings But there still remains one an ious thou ht thou dost not free me from, a thou ht of fe re those whose li es I cherish spared t me?

Se The are, and high their fame throu h all the arm spreads

A The old man Iolaus—is h t ali ?

Se A that h is, hero whom the god deli ht to honour

Al How so Did he perform some deed of prowess

Se H hath passed from to youth once more

A Th tale is passing strange but first I would that thou shouldst t ll me how our friend won the da

Se One peech of mine puts t all clearl before thee When e had d ployed our troops and mar shaled them face to fac w th on another H llus dismounted from his fou horsed hariot nd tood mid betwixt the hos s. Then ried he "Cap tain, ho art ome f om Argos, why cannot we lea this land alone N hurt wilt thou do M cenæ, if of on ma thou rob her come! meet me n si gl combat and, f thou sla me tak th hild en of Heracles with thee but if thou fall, lea me possess m ncestral honours and m home The host ried yes si e the scheme h offered as fair one both nd them of their troubl nd satisf their alour But that other feeli no shame he ore those who heard the hallenge or t his own cowa d quailed general though he was, to come within reach f the stubborn spear showing him self an abject coward yet w th such a spirit he came to ensla the chil lren of Heracles. Then did H llus withdraw to his own ranks again, and the prophets seein that no reconciliation would be effected b single combat began the sacrifice without delay and forthwith let flow from a human throat auspicious streams of blood And some were mountin chariots, while others couched beneath the shelter of their shields, and th kin of the Athenians, as a h hborn chieftain should would exhort h s host Fellow citizens, the land that feeds you and that gave ou birth, demands to-da the help of every man." Like wise Eurystheus besought his allies that they should scorn to sully the fam of Argos and Mycenæ Anon the Etrurian trumpet sounded loud and clear and hand to hand they rushed then think how loudl clashed their ringing shields, what din arose of cries and groans confused! At first the onset of the Ar gi e spearmen broke our ranks then they in turn ga e ground next, foot to foot and man to man, they fou ht their stubborn fra many fallin the while And either chief cl eered on his men "Sons of Athens! Ye who till th fields of Argos! ward from your land d grace." Do all we could and pu of every effort scarce could we turn th Argi e line in fl ht When lo! old Iolaus sees Hyllus startin from th ranks, whereon h lifts his hands to him with a pra er to take him up into his chariot There on he seized the ein and went hard after the horses of Eurystheus. From this point onward must I speak from hearsay thou h h therto as one whose own eyes saw For as he was crossin Pallene s hill, sacred to the goddess Athen h cau ht si ht of Eurys theus chari t and pra ed to H be and t Zeus, that for one sin le day he mi ht grow young again and wreak hi ven ean e on his foes. Now must thou hear wond ous tale two stars settled on th horses yokes and threw the chariot into dark shadow which—at lea t so say our w ser folk—were th son and H be and from that murk gloom appeared that aged man in th form of a youth with tron ou g arm then by the rocks of Sciron the hero Iolaus o ertakes Eurystheus chariot. And he bound his hand w th gyves, and is brin in that chi ftain once so prosperous as trophy hither whose for tune now doth prea h a lesson, clear as day to all the sons of men that none should envy him, who seems to thri e until they see his death for for tune s moods last b t a day

Ch O Zeus, who puttest my foes t fl ht, now may I behold the da that frees me from cruel fear!

Al At la t O Zeus, hast thou turned a favourin eye on m ills tion y t do I thank thee fo what has happened And tho h er this I did n t believe my son was gathered to the gods, now am I con inced thereof M hildren, now at last from toil shal e be free f ee from him whom hideous death wa ts, E rystheu now shall ye behold you fa ther s city and set foot in th land of your inherit ance, and sacrifice to those an estral gods, from whom ye ha e been d barred and forced to lead in stran gers lands Lf of wret hed vagrancy But tell me

Pallas.
[1]The festival of the Panathenæa.

what sage purpose Iolaus nursed in his heart that he spared the life of Eurystheus for to my mind this is no wisdom to catch a foe and wreak no vengeance on him

Se Twas his regard for thee that thou mightst see him subject to thy hand and triumph o er him *Rest assured twas no willing prisoner he made* but by strong constraint he bound him for Eurystheus was loth indeed to come alive into thy presence and pay his penalty Farewell my aged mistress I pray thee remember thy first promise when I was beginning my story set me free for at such a time as this sincerity becometh noble lips *Exit* SERVANT

Ch *Sweet is the dance to me whenso the clear* toned flute and lovely Aphrodite shed grace upon the feast and a joyful thing too it is I trow to witness the good luck of friends who till then ne er dreamt of it For numerous is the offspring of Fate that bringeth all to pass and of Time the son of Crono Thine is the path of justice O my city *this must no man wrest from thee thy reverence for the gods* and whoso denieth it of thee draws nigh to frenzy s goal with these plain proofs in view Yea for the god proclaims it clearly by cutting short the bad man s pride in every case In heaven mother lives thy son passed from earth away that he went down to Hades halls his body burnt by the fire s fierce flame is past belief in golden halls reclined he has to wife Hebe lovely nymph Thou O Hymen hast honoured them children both of Zeus Things for the most part *form a singe chain for instance men say Athene* used to champion their father and now the citizens of that goddess have saved his children and checked the insol nce of him whose heart preferred violence to justice *God save me from such arrogance* such greed of soul!

Enter MESSENGER *with* EURYSTHEUS *bound*

Messenger Mistress though thine eyes see him yet will I announce we have brought Eurystheus hither for thy pleasure an unexpected sight for him no less a chance he ne er foresaw for little he *thought of ever falling into thy hands what time* he marched from Mycenæ with his toil worn warriors to sack Athens thinking himself far above fortune But a power divine hath reversed our destinies changing their position *Now* Hyllus and brave Iolaus I left raising an image to Zeus who routs the foe for their triumphant victory whilst they bid me bring this prisoner to thee wishing to gladden thy heart for tis the sweetest sight to see a foe fall on evil days after prosperity

Al Art come thou hateful wretch? Hath Justice caught thee then at last? First turn thy head this way to me and endure to look thy enemies in the face for thou art no more the ruler but the slave Art thou the man—for this I fain would learn—who didst presume *to heap thy insults on my son* who now is wh re he is thou miscreant? What outrage didst thou abstain from putting upon him? Thou that didst make him go down alive even to Hades and wouldst send him with an order to slay hydras and lions? Thy other evil schemes I mention not for to tell them were a tedious task for me Nor did it content thee to venture thus far only no! but from all Hellas wouldst thou drive me and my children heaven s suppliants thou h we were grey heads some of us and some still tender babes But here hast thou found men and a free city that feared not thee Die in torment must thou and even so wilt thou gain in every way for one death is not thy due after all the sorrow thou hast caused

Me Thou mayst not slay him

Al Then have we taken him captive in vain But say what law *forbids his death?*

Me It is not the will of the rulers of this land

Al Why what is this? *Do they not approve of* slaying enemies?

Me Not such as they have taken alive in battle.

Al Did Hyllus uphold this decision?

Me He I suppose ought to have disobeyed the law of the land

Al The prisoner s life ought not to have been spared a moment

Me It was then that he was wronged by not being slain at first

Al Why then he is still in time to pay his penalty

Me There is no one who will slay him now

Al I will and yet I count myself someone

Me Well thou wilt incur great blame if thou do this deed

Al *I love this city well that cannot be gainsaid* But since this man hath fallen into my power no mortal hand shall wrest him from me Wherefore let who will call me the woman bold with thoughts *too high for her sex yet shall this deed be brought* to pass by me

Ch Lady full well I understand thou hast a dire quarrel with this man and tis pardonable

Eurystheus Woman be sure I will not flatter thee nor say aught to save my life that can give any occasion for a charge of cowardice It was not of my *own free will I took this quarrel up* I am aware that I was born thy cousin and kinsman to Heracles thy son but whether I would or no Hera by her power divine caused me to be afflicted thus Still *when I undertook to be his foe* and when I knew I had to enter on this struggle I set myself to devise trouble in plenty and oft from time to time my midnight communing bore fruit scheming how to push aside and slay my foes and for the future divorce myself from fear for I knew that son of thine was no mere cipher but a man indeed yea for though he was my foe I will speak well of him because he was a man of worth Now after he was taken hence was I not forced by reason of these children s hatred and because I was conscious of an *hereditary feud to leave no stone unturned* by slaying banishing and plotting against them? So long as I did so my safety was assured Suppose thyself hadst had my lot wouldst not thou have set to harassing the lion s angry whelps instead of letting

then dwell at Argos undisturbed? Thou wilt not persuade us otherwise. Now therefore, since they did not slay me then, when I was prepared to die, by the laws of Hellas my death becomes a curse on him who slays me now. The city wisely let me go, in that she regarded the gods more than her hatred of me. Thou hast had my answer to thy words; henceforth must I be called a craving spirit and noble hero too.[1] 'Tis even thus with me; to die have I no wish, but if I leave my life, I shall in no way be grieved.

Ch. Alcmena, fain I would advise thee somewhat; let this man go, for 'tis the city's will.

Al. Suppose he die, and yet I obey the city?

Ch. That would be best of all; but how can this be?

Al. I will teach thee easily. I will slay him and then give up his corpse to those of his friends, who come for it; for, as regards his body, I will not disobey the state, but by his death shall he pay me the penalty.

Eu. Slay me, I do not ask thee for mercy; yet since this city let me go and shrunk from slaying me, I will reward it with an old oracle of Loxias, which in time will benefit them more than doth appear. Bury my body after death in its destined grave in front of the shrine of the virgin goddess[2] at Pallene. And I will be thy friend and guardian of thy city for ever, where I lie buried in a foreign soil, but a bitter foe to these children's descendants, whensoever with gathered host they come against this land, traitors to your kindness now; such are the strangers ye have championed. Why then came I hither, if I knew all this, instead of regarding the god's oracle? Because I thought that Hera was mightier far than any oracle, and would not betray me. Waste no drink-offering on my tomb, nor spill the victim's blood; for I will requite them for my treatment here with a journey they shall rue; and ye shall have double gain from me, for I will help you and harm them by my death.

Al. Why, why delay to kill this man, after hearing this, since this is needed to secure the safety of your city and your children? Himself points out the safest road. Though the man is now our foe, yet after death is he our gain. Away with him, ye servants, and cast him to the dogs when ye have slain him. Think not thou shalt live to cast me forth from my native land again.

Exeunt MESSENGER *with* EURYSTHEUS.

Ch. I agree. Lead on, servants. Our conduct shall bring no stain of guilt upon our rulers.

Exeunt OMNES.

[1] i.e. I will meet my doom like a hero and haunt you after death.

[2] Pallas.

THE SUPPLIANTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ÆTHRA	HERALD
CHORUS OF ARGIVE MOTHERS	MESSENGER
THESEUS	EVADNE
ADRASTUS	IPHIS
	CHILDREN
ATHENA	

The Temple of Demeter at Eleusis Enter ÆTHRA ADRASTUS *and* CHORUS OF ARGIVE MOTHERS

Æthra O Demeter guardian of this Eleusinian land and ye servants of the goddess who attend her fane grant happiness to me and my son Theseus to the city of Athens and the country of Pittheus wherein my father reared me Æthra in a happy home and gave me in marriage to Ægeus Pandion s son according to the oracle of Loxias This prayer I make when I behold these aged dames who leaving their homes in Argos now throw themselves with suppliant branches at my knees in their awful trouble for around the gates of Cadmus have they lost their seven noble sons whom on a day Adrastus king of Argos led thither eager to secure for exiled Polynices his son in law a share in the heritage of Œdipus so now their mothers would bury in the grave the dead whom the spear hath slain but the victors prevent them and will not allow them to take up the corpses spurning Heaven s laws Here lies Adrastus on the ground with streaming eye sharing with them the burden of their prayer to me and bemoaning the havoc of the sword and the sorry fate of the warriors whom he led from their homes And he doth urge me use entreaty to persuade my son to take up the dead and help to bury them either by winning words or force of arms laying on my son and on Athens this task alone Now it chanced that I had left my house and come to offer sacrifice on behalf of the earth s crop at this shrine where first the fruitful corn showed its bristling shocks above the soil And here at the holy altars of the twain goddesses Demeter and her daughter I wait holding these sprays of foliage a bond that bindeth not in compassion for these childless mothers hoary with age and from reverence for the sacred fillets To call Theseus hither is my herald to the city gone that he may rid the land of that which grieveth them or loose these my suppliant bonds with pious observance of the gods will for such as are discreet amongst women should in all cases invoke the aid of men

Ch At thy knees I fall aged dame and my old lips beseech thee arise rescue from the slain my children s bodies whose limbs by death relaxed are left a prey to savage mountain beasts beholding the bitter tears which spring to my eyes and my old wrinkled skin torn by my hands for what can I do else? who never laid out my children dead within my halls nor now behold their tombs heaped up with earth Thou too honoured lady once a son didst bear crowning thy lord s marriage with fond joy then share O share with me thy mother s feelings in such measure as my sad heart grieves for my own dead sons and persuade thy son whose aid we implore to go unto the river Ismenus there to place within my hapless arms the bodies of my children slain in their prime and left without a tomb Though[1] not as piety enjoins yet from sheer necessity I have come to the fire crowned altars of the gods falling on my knees with instant supplication for my cause is just and tis in thy power blest as thou art in thy children to remove from me my woe so in my sore distress I do beseech thee of my misery place in my hands my son s dead body that I may throw my arms about his hapless limbs

Semi Chorus Behold a rivalry in sorrow! woe takes up the tale of woe hark! thy servants beat their breasts Come ye who join the mourners wail come O sympathetic band to join the dance which Hades honours let the pearly nail be stained red as it rends your cheeks let your skin be streaked with gore for honours rendered to the dead are a credit to the living Sorrow s charm doth drive me wild insatiate painful endless even as the trickling stream that gushes from some steep rock s face for tis woman s way to fall a weeping o er the cruel calamity of children dead Ah me! would I could die and forget my anguish! *Enter* THESEUS

Theseus What is this lamentation that I hear this beating of the breast these dirges for the dead with cries that echo from this shrine? How fluttering fear disquiets me lest haply my mother have gotten some mischance in quest of whom I come for she hath been long absent from home Ha! what now? A strange sight challenges my speech I see my aged mother sitting at the altar and stranger dames are with her who in various note proclaim their woe

[1] Because they had arrived during a festival and their supplication at such a time was a bad omen

from ged eyes the piteous tear is startin to th ground, their hair is shorn, their robes are not the robes of jo What means t, mother? 'Tis thine to make t plain to me mine to listen yea for I expect some tid...s strange.

Æ. My son, these are the mothers of those chief tains seven, who fell around th gates of Cadmus town. W th suppliant boughs they keep me pris oner as thou seest in their midst.

Th. And who is yonder man, that moaneth pite ous! in th gateway?

Æ. Adrastus, they inform me king of Argos.

Th. Are those his children those boys who stand round him?

Æ. Not his, but the sons f the fallen slain.

Th. Why are they come to us, with suppliant hand outstretched?

Æ. I know but ts for them to tell their story my son.

Th. To thee in thy mantle muffled I address my inquiries unveil thy head let lamentation be and speak for naught can be achieved save throu h the utterance of thy tongue.

Adrastus Victorious prince of the Athenian realm, Theseus, to thee and t th city I a suppliant, come.

Th. What seekest thou? What need is thine?

Ad. Dost know how I did lead an expedition to its ruin?

Th. Assuredly thou didst not pass throu h Hel las, all in silence

Ad. There I lost th pick of Argos sons.

Th. These are the results of that unhappy war

Ad. I went and cra ed their bodies from Th bes.

Th. Didst thou el on heralds, Hermes servants, in order to bury them?

Ad. I did and even then their sla ers said me nay

Th Why what say the t th just request?

A Say! Success makes them forget how to bear their fortune.

Th. Art come t me then for counsel? o where fore?

Ad. With the wish that thou O Theseus, shouldst recover the sons of the Arg es.

Th. Where is your Argos now? were its vauntings all in vain?

Ad. Defeat and ruin are our lot T the for id e come.

Th. Is this thy own pri at resol e or the wish of all the city?

Ad. The sons of Danaus, one and all, implore thee to bury th dead

Th. Why didst lead thy seven armies against Thebes?

Ad. T confer that fa ou on the husbands of my daughters twain

Th To which f th Arg es didst thou gi e thy daughters in marriage

Ad. I made no match for them with kinsmen of m family

Th. What! didst give Arg e maid to foreign lords?

Ad Yea to T d us, and to Polynices, who was Theban born.

Th. What induced thee to select this alliance?

Ad Da k riddles of Phœbus stole away my jud ment.

Th What said Apollo to d t rmine the maidens marriage?

Ad That I should give m daughters twain to a wild boar and a lion

Th How dost thou explain the messa e of the god?

Ad One ni ht came to m door two exiles.

Th The name of each declare thou art speaking of both together

Ad They fou ht to ether Tydeus with Poly nices.

Th Didst thou gi e thy daughters to them as to wild bea ts?

Ad Yea fo a they fou ht I likened them to those monsters twain

Th Why had they left the borders of their nati e land and come to thee?

Ad T deus was exiled for the murder of a kins man

Th. Wh...refore had the son of Œdipus left Thebes?

Ad By reason of his father s curse, not to pill his brother blood

Th Wise no doubt that oluntary exile

Ad But those who sta ed t home were for injur ing th absent

Th What! did brother rob brother of his inherit ance?

Ad. To a en e this I set out hence my ruin

Th. Didst consult seers, and gaze nto the flame of b rnt-offerings?

Ad Ah me! th u pressest on the very po nt wherein I most did fail.

Th It seems thy going was not fa oured by heaven.

Ad Worse I went in spite e en of Amphiaraus.

Th. And so heaven li htly turned its face from thee

Ad I was carried away by th clamour of youn er men.

Th Thou didst favour courage instead of discre tion

Ad True and many a general owes d feat to that O ki of Athens, bra est of the sons of H llas, I blush to throw myself upon the ground and cla p thy knees, I a grey haired kin blest in days gone by yet need must I ield to my m sfortunes. I pray thee sa e th dead ha e pity on my so rows and on these the mothers of the slain, whom hoary eld find reft of their sons yet th y endured to journey hither and tread a foreign soil with a ed totterin steps, bearin no embassy to Dem ter s myster es onl seeking burial for their dead which lot should have been theirs, e en burial by the hands of sons still in their prime And tis wise in th rich to see th poor man po erty and n the poor man to turn ambitious eyes toward the rich, that so h may himself and l a longing for property and they

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[1]Because they had arrived during a festival and their supplication at such a time was a bad omen.

Æ. Yet the word that lurks within my heart makes me hesitate.

Th. Shame! to hide from friends good counsel.

Æ. Nay then, I will not hold my peace to blame myself hereafter for having now kept silence to my shame, nor will I forego my honourable proposal, from the common fear that it is useless for women to give good advice. First, my son, I exhort thee give good heed to heaven's will, lest from slighting it thou suffer shipwreck; for in this one single point thou failest, though well advised in all else. Further, I would have patiently endured, had it not been my duty to venture somewhat for injured folk; and this, my son, it is that brings thee now thy honour, and causes me no fear to urge that thou shouldst use thy power to make men of violence, who prevent the dead from receiving their meed of burial and funeral rites, perform this bounden duty; and check those who would confound the customs of all Hellas; for this it is that holds men's states together—strict observance of the laws. And some, no doubt, will say 'twas cowardice made thee stand aloof in terror, when thou mightest have won for thy city a crown of glory; and, though thou didst encounter a savage swine, labouring for a sorry task, yet when the time came for thee to face the helmet and pointed spear and do thy best, thou wert found to be a coward. Nay! do not so if thou be son of mine. Dost see how fiercely thy country looks on its revilers when they mock her for want of counsel? Yea, for in her toils she groweth greater. But states, whose policy is dark and cautious, have their sight darkened by their carefulness. My son, wilt thou not go succour the dead and these poor women in their need? I have no fears for thee, starting as thou dost with right upon thy side; and although I see the prosperity of Cadmus' folk, still am I confident they will throw a different die; for the deity reverses all things again.

Ch. Ah! best of friends, right well hast thou pleaded for me and for Adrastus, and hence my joy is doubled.

Th. Mother, the word that I have spoken are his fair deserts, and I have declared my opinion of the counsels that ruined him; yet do I perceive the truth of thy warning to me, that it ill suits my character to shun dangers. For by a long and glorious career have I displayed this my habit among Hellenes, of ever punishing the wicked. Wherefore I cannot refuse toil. For what will spiteful tongues say of me, when thou, my mother, who more than all others fearest for my safety, bidst me undertake this enterprise? Yea, I will go about this business and rescue the dead by words persuasive; or, failing that, the spear forthwith shall decide this issue, nor will heaven grudge me this. But I require the whole city's sanction also, which my mere wish will ensure; still by communicating the proposal to them I shall find the people better disposed. For them I made supreme, when I set this city free, by giving all an equal vote. So I will take Adrastus as a text for what I have to say and go to their assembly, and when I have won them to these views, I will return hither, after collecting a picked band of young Athenians; and then remaining under arms I will send a message to Creon, begging the bodies of the dead. But do ye, aged ladies, remove from my mother your holy wreaths, that I may take her by the hand and conduct her to the house of Ægeus; for a wretched son is he who rewards not his parents by service; for, when he hath conferred on them the best he hath, he in his turn from his own sons receives all such service as he gave to them.

Exeunt THESEUS *and* ÆTHRA.

Ch. O Argos, home of steeds, my native land! ye have heard with your ears these words, the king's pious will toward the gods in the sight of great Pelasgia and throughout Argos. May he reach the goal! yea, and triumph over my sorrows, rescuing the gory corpse, the mother's idol, and making the land of Inachus his friend by helping her. For pious toil is a fair ornament to cities, and carries with it a grace that never wastes away. What will the city decide, I wonder? Will it conclude a friendly truce with me, and shall we obtain burial for our sons? Help, O help, city of Pallas, the mother's cause, that so they may not pollute the laws of all mankind. Thou, I know, dost reverence right, and to injustice dealest out defeat, a protection at all times to the afflicted.

Enter THESEUS *with Athenian* HERALD.

Th. (To HERALD) Forasmuch as with this thy art thou hast ever served the state and me by carrying my proclamations far and wide, so now cross Asopus and the waters of Ismenus, and declare this message to the haughty king of the Cadmeans: "Theseus, thy neighbour, one who well may win the boon he craves, begs as a favour thy permission to bury the dead, winning to thyself thereby the love of all the Erechthidæ." And if they will acquiesce, come back again, but if they hearken not, thy second message runneth thus, they may expect my warrior host; for at the sacred fount of Callichorus my army camps in readiness and is being reviewed. Moreover, the city gladly of its own accord undertook this enterprise, when it perceived my wish. Ha! who comes hither to interrupt my speech? A Theban herald, so it seems, though I am not sure thereof. Stay; haply he may save thee thy trouble. For by his coming he meets my purpose half way.

Enter Theban HERALD.

Herald. Who is the despot of this land? To whom must I announce the message of Creon, who rules o'er the land of Cadmus, since Eteocles was slain by the hand of his brother Polynices, at the seven fold gates of Thebes?

Th. Sir stranger, thou hast made a false beginning to thy speech in seeking here a despot. For this city is not ruled by one man, but is free. The people rule in succession year by year, allowing no preference to wealth, but the poor man shares equally with the rich.

He. Thou givest me here an advantage, as it might

[1]The monster Phæa, which infested the neighbourhood of Corinth.

whom fortune frowns not on should gaze on misery s presentment likewise who maketh songs should take a pleasure in their making for if it be not so with him he will in no wise avail to gladden others if himself have sorrow in his home nay tis not even right to expect it Mayhap thou lt say

Why pass the land of Pelops o er and lay this toil *on Athens? This am I bound to declare* Sparta is cruel her customs variable the other states are small and weak Thy city alone would be able to undertake this labour for it turns an eye on suffering and hath in thee a young and gallant king for want whereof to lead their hosts states ere now have often perished

Ch I too Theseus urge the same plea to thee have pity on my hard fate

Th Full oft have I argued out this subject with others For there are who say there is more bad than good in human nature to the which I hold a contrary view that good o er bad predominates in man for if it were not so we should not exist He hath my praise whoe er of gods brought us to live *by rule from chaos and from brutishness first by* implanting reason and next by giving us a tongue to declare our thoughts so as to know the meaning of what is said bestowing fruitful crops and drops of rain from heaven to make them grow wherewith to nourish earth s fruits and to water her lap and more than this protection from the wintry storm and means to ward from us the sun god s scorching heat the art of sailing o er the sea so that we might exchange with one another whatso our countries lack And where sight fails us and our knowledge is not sure the seer foretells by gazing on the flame by reading signs in folds of entrails or by divination from the flight of birds Are we not then too proud when heaven hath made such preparation for our *life not to be content therewith? But our presump*tion seeks to lord it over heaven and in the pride of our hearts we think we are wiser than the gods Methinks thou art even of this number a son of folly seeing that thou though obedient to Apollo s oracle in giving thy daughters to strangers as if gods really existed yet hast hurt thy house by mingling the stream of its pure line with muddy waters no! never should the wise man have joined the stock of just and unjust in one but should have gotten prosperous friends for his family For the deity confusing their destinies doth oft destroy by the sinner s fate him who never sinned nor committed injustice Thou didst lead all Argos forth to battle though seers proclaimed the will of heaven and then in scorn of them and in violent disregard of the gods hast ruined thy city led away by younger men such as court distinction and add war to war unrighteously destroying their fellow citizens one aspires to lead an army another fain would seize the reins of power and work his wanton will a third is bent on gain careless of any mischief the people thereby suffer For there are three ranks of citizens the rich a useless set that ever crave for more the poor and destitute fearful folk that cherish envy more than is right and shoot out grievous stings against the men who have aught beguiled as they are by the eloquence of vicious leaders while the class that is mid most of the three preserveth cities observing such order as the state ordains Shall I then become thy ally? What fair pretext should I urge before my countrymen? Depart in peace! For why shouldst thou having been ill advised thyself seek to drag our fortune down?

Ch He erred but with the young men rests this error while he may well be pardoned

Ad I did not choose thee kin to judge my affliction but came to thee to cure it no! nor if in aught my fortunes prove me wrong came I to thee to punish or correct them but to seek thy help But if thou wilt not I must be content with thy decision for how can I help it? Come aged dames away! Yet leave behind you here the woven leaves of pale green foliage calling to witness heaven and earth Demeter that fire bearing goddess and the sun god s light that our prayers to heaven availed us naught

Ch [1] who was Pelops son and we are of the *land of Pelops and share with thee the blood of an*cestors What art thou doing? wilt thou betray these suppliant symbols and banish from thy land these aged women without the boon they should obtain? Do not so e en the wild beast finds a refuge in the rock the slave in the altars of the gods and a state when tempest tossed cowers to its neighbour s shelter for naught in this life of man is blest unto its end

Rise hapless one from the sacred floor of Persephone rise clasp him by the knees and implore him O recover the bodies of our dead sons the children that I lost—ah woe is me!—beneath the walls of Cadmus town Ah me! ah me! Take me by the hand poor aged sufferer that I am support *and guide and raise me up* By thy beard kind friend glory of Hellas I do beseech thee as I clasp thy knees and hands in my misery O pity me as I entreat for my sons with my tale of wretched woe like some beggar nor let my sons lie there unburied in the land of Cadmus glad prey for beasts whilst thou art in thy prime I implore thee See the tear drop tremble in my eye as thus I throw me at thy knees to win my children burial

Th Mother mine why weepest thou drawing o er thine eyes thy veil? Is it because thou didst hear their piteous lamentations? To my own heart it goes Raise thy silvered head weep not where thou sittest at the holy altar of Demeter

Æ Ah woe!

Th Tis not for thee their sorrows to lament

Æ Ye hapless dames!

Th Thou art not of their company

Æ May I a scheme declare my son that shall add to thy glory and the state s?

Th Yea for oft even from women s lips issue wise counsels

[1]Something is lost here referring to claims of relationship The sense perhaps is thou art thyself related to Pittheus who was etc

law of all Hellas. What is not well in this? If ye suffered aught from the Argives—lo! they are dead; ye took a splendid vengeance on your foes and covered them with shame, and now your right is at an end. Let the dead now be buried in the earth, and each element return to the place from whence it came to the body, the breath to the air, the body to the ground; for in no wise did we get it for our own, but to live our life in, and after that its mother earth must take it back again. Dost think 'tis Argos thou art injuring in refusing burial to the dead? Nay, all Hellas shares herein, if a man rob the dead of their due and keep them from the tomb; for, if this law be enacted, it will strike dismay into the stoutest hearts. And art thou come to cast dire threat at me, while thy own folk are afraid of giving burial to the dead? What is your fear? Think you they will undermine your land in their graves, or that they will beget children in the womb of earth, from whom shall rise an avenger? A silly waste of words, in truth it was, to show you fear of paltry groundless terrors. Go, triflers, learn the lesson of human misery; our life is made up of struggles; some men there be that find their fortune soon, others have to wait, while some at once are blest. Fortune lives a dainty life; to her the wretched pays his court and homage to win her smile; her likewise doth the prosperous man extol, for fear the favouring gale may leave him. These lessons should we take to heart, to bear with moderation, free from wrath, our wrongs, and do naught to hurt a whole city. What then? Let us, who will the pious deed perform, bury the corpses of the slain. Else is the issue clear; I will go and bury them by force. For never shall it be proclaimed through Hellas that heaven's ancient law was set at naught, when it devolved on me and the city of Pandion.

Ch. Be of good cheer; for if thou preserve the light of justice, thou shalt escape many a charge that men might urge.

H. Wilt thou that I sum up in brief all thou wouldst say?

Th. Say what thou wilt; for thou art not silent as it is.

H. Thou shalt never take the sons of Argos from our land.

Th. Hear, then, my answer too to that, if so thou wilt.

H. I will hear thee; not that I wish it, but I must give thee thy turn.

Th. I will bury the dead when from Asopus' land I have removed them.

He. First must thou adventure somewhat in the front of war.

Th. Many an enterprise and of a different kind have I ere this endured.

H. Wert thou then begotten of thy sire to cope with every foe?

Th. Ay, with all wanton villains; virtue I punish not.

H. To meddle is aye thy wont and thy city's too.

Th. Hence her enterprise on many a field hath won her frequent success.

He. Come then, that the warriors of the dragon-crop may catch thee in our city.

Th. What furious warrior-host could spring from dragon's seed?

H. Thou shalt learn that to thy cost. As yet thou art young and rash.

Th. Thy boastful speech stirs not my heart at all to rage. Yet get thee gone from my land, taking with thee the idle words thou broughtest; for we are making no advance. (*Exit* HERALD) 'Tis time for all to start, each stout footman, and whoso mounts the car; 'tis time the bit, dripping with foam, should urge the charger on toward the land of Cadmus. For I will march in person to the seven gates thereof with the sharp sword in my hand, and be myself my herald. But thee, Adrastus, I bid stay, nor blend with mine thy fortunes, for I will take my own good star to lead my host, a chieftain famed in famous deeds of arms. One thing alone I need, the favour of all gods that reverence right, for the presence of these things insures victory. For their valour availeth men naught, unless they have the god's goodwill. *Exit* THESEUS

Semi-Chorus I. Unhappy mothers of those hapless chiefs! How wildly in my heart pale fear stirs up alarm!

Semi-Chorus II. What is this new cry thou utterest?

Semi-Ch. I. I fear the issue of the strife whereto the hosts of Pallas march.

Semi-Ch. II. Dost speak of issues of the sword, or interchange of words?

Semi-Ch. I. That last were gain indeed; but if the carnage of battle, fighting, and the noise of beaten breasts again be heard in the land, what, alas! will be said of me, who am the cause thereof?

Semi-Ch. II. Yet may fate again bring low the brilliant victor; 'tis this brave thought that twines about my heart.

Semi-Ch. I. Thou speakest of the gods as if they were just.

Semi-Ch. II. For who but they allot whate'er betides?

Semi-Ch. I. I see many a contradiction in their dealings with men.

Semi-Ch. II. The former fear hath warped thy judgment. Vengeance calls vengeance forth; slaughter calls for slaughter; but the gods give respite from affliction, holding in their own hands each thing's allotted end.

Semi-Ch. I. Would I could reach yon plain with turrets crowned, leaving Callichorus, fountain of the goddess!

Semi-Ch. II. O that some god would give me wings to fly to the city of rivers twain!

Semi-Ch. I. So mightest thou see and know the fortunes of thy friends.

Semi-Ch. II. What fate, what issue there awaits the valiant monarch of this land?

Semi-Ch. I. Once more do we invoke the god we called upon before; yea, in our fear this is our first and chiefest trust.

Semi-Ch. II. O Zeus, father to the child the heifer

be in a game of draughts for the city whence I come is ruled by one man only not by the mob none there puffs up the citizens with specious words and for his own advantage twists them this way or that one moment dear to them and lavish of his favours the next a bane to all and yet by fresh calumnies of others he hides his former failures and escapes punishment Besides how shall the people if it cannot form true judgments be able rightly to direct the state? Nay tis time not haste that affords a better understanding A poor hind granted he be not all unschooled would still be unable from his toil to give his mind to politics Verily the better sort count it no healthy sign when the worthless man obtains a reputation by beguiling with words the populace though aforetime he was naught

Th This herald is a clever fellow a dabbler in the art of talk But since thou hast thus entered the lists with me listen awhile for twas thou didst challenge a discussion Naught is more hostile to a city than a despot where he is there are in the first place no laws common to all but one man is tyrant in whose keeping and in his alone the law resides and in that case equality is at an end But when the laws are written down rich and poor alike have equal justice and it is open to the weaker to use the same language to the prosperous when he is reviled by him and the weaker prevails over the stronger if he have justice on his side Freedom s mark is also seen in this Who hath wholesome counsel to declare unto the state? And he who chooses to do so *gains renown while he who hath no wish* remains silent What greater equality can there be in a city? Again where the people are absolute rulers of the land they rejoice in having a reserve of youthful *citizens while a king counts this a hostile element* and strives to slay the leading men all such as he deems discreet for he feareth for his power How then can a city remain stable where one cuts short all *enterprise* and mows down the young like meadow flowers in spring time? What boots it to acquire wealth and livelihood for children merely to add to the tyrant s substance by one s toil? Why train up virgin daughters virtuously in our homes to gratify a tyrant s whim whenso he will, and cause tears to those who rear them? May my life end if ever my children are to be wedded by violence! This bolt I launch in answer to thy words Now say why art thou come? *what needest thou of this land?* Had not thy city sent thee to thy cost hadst thou come with thy outrageous utterances for it is the herald s duty to tell the message he is bidden and hie him back in haste *Henceforth let Creon send to my city* some other messenger less talkative than thee

Ch Look you! how insolent the villains are when Fortune is kind to them just as if it would be well *with them for ever*

He Now will I speak On these disputed points hold thou this view but I the contrary So I and all the people of Cadmus forbid thee to admit *Adrastus to* this land but if he is here drive him forth in disregard of the holy suppliant bough he bears ere sinks yon blazing sun and attempt not violently to take up the dead seeing thou hast naught to do with the city of *Argos* And if thou wilt *hearken to me* thou shalt bring thy barque of state into port unharmed by the billows but if not fierce shall the surge of battle be that we and our allies shall raise Take good thought nor angered at my words because forsooth thou rulest thy city with freedom return a vaunting answer from thy feebler means. Hope is man s curse many a state hath it involved in strife by leading them into excessive rage For whenso the city has to vote on the question of war no man ever takes his own death into account but shifts this misfortune on to his neighbour but if death had been before their eyes when they were giving their votes Hellas would ne er have rushed to her doom in mad desire for battle And yet each man amongst us knows which of the two to prefer the good or ill and how much better peace is for mankind than war—peace the Muses chiefest friend the foe of sorrow whose joy is in glad throngs of children and its delight in prosperity These are the blessings we cast away and wickedly embark on war man enslaving his weaker brother and cities following suit Now thou art helping our foes even after death trying to rescue and bury those whom their own acts of insolence have ruined Verily then it would seem Capaneus was unjustly blasted by the thunderbolt and charred upon the ladder he had raised against our gates swearing he would sack our town whether the god would or no nor should the yawning earth have snatched away *the seer*[1] opening wide her mouth to take his chariot and its horses in nor should the other chieftains be stretched at our gates their skeletons to atoms crushed neath boulders Either boast thy wit *transcendeth* that of Zeus or else allow that gods are right to slay the ungodly The wise should love their children first next their parents and country whose fortunes it behoves them to increase rather than break down Rashness in a leader as in a pilot causeth shipwreck who knoweth when to be quiet is a wise man Yea and this too is bravery even forethought

Ch The punishment Zeus hath inflicted was surely enough there was no need to heap this wanton insult on us

Ad Abandoned wretch!

Th Peace Adrastus! say no more set not thy words before *mine* for tis not to thee this fellow is come with his message but to me and I must answer him Thy first assertion will I answer first I am not aware that Creon is my lord and master or that his power outweigheth mine that so he *should compel* Athens to act on this wise nay! for then would the tide of time have to flow backward if we are to be ordered about as he thinks 'Tis not I who choose this war seeing that I did not even join these warriors to go unto the land of Cadmus but still I claim to bury the fallen dead not injuring any state nor yet introducing murderous strife but preserving the

[1]Amphiaraus

thou didst escape and after that I will ask thee of the rest.

Me. During the uproar which prevailed in the city own to the battle I passed the gates, just as the host had entered them.

Ad. Are ye bringing the bodies, for the which the strife arose?

Me. Ay each of the seven chiefs who led their famous hosts.

Ad. What sayest thou? the rest who fell—say where are they?

Me. They have found burial in the dells of Cithaeron.

Ad. On this or that side of the mount? And who did bury them?

Me. Theseus buried them neath the shadow of Eleutherae's cliff.

Ad. Where didst thou leave the dead he hath not buried?

Me. Not far away earnest haste makes every goal look close.

Ad. No doubt in sorrow slaves would gather them from the carnage.

Me. Slaves! not one of them was set to do this toil.

Ad.

Me. Thou wouldst say so had st thou been there to see his loving tendance of the dead.

Ad. Did he himself wash the bloody wounds of the hapless youths?

Me. A and strewed their biers and wrapped them in their shrouds.

Ad. An awful burden this, involving some disgrace.

Me. Why what disgrace to men are their fellows' sorrows

Ad. Ah me! how much rather had I died with them!

Me. 'Tis vain to weep and move to tears these women.

Ad. Methinks tis they who give the lesson. Enough of that! My hand I lift at meeting of the dead, and pour forth a tearful dirge to Hades, calling on my friends, whose loss I mourn in wretched solitude for this one thing when once tis spent, man cannot recover the breath of life, though he know the way to get his wealth again.

Ch. Joy is here and sorrow too—for the state fair fame and for our captains, double meed of honour. Bitter for me it is to see the limbs of my dead sons and yet a welcome sight withal because I shall behold the unexpected day after sorrow's cup was full. Would that Father Time had kept me unwed from my youth up even until now when I am old! What need had I of children? Methinks I should not have suffered excessively had I never born the marriage yoke. but now I have my sorrow full in view the loss of children dear

Lo I see the bodies of the fallen youths Woe is me! would I could join these children in their death and descend to Hades with them

Enter ADRASTUS.[1]

Ad. Mothers, raise the wail for the dead departed cry in answer when ye hear my note of woe

Ch. My sons, my sons! O bitter words for loving mothers to address to you! To thee my lifeless child I call.

Ad. Woe! woe!

Ch. Ah me my sufferings!

Ad. Alas!

Ch.

Ad. We have endured alas!

Ch. Sorrows most grievous

Ad. O citizens of Argos! do ye not behold my fate?

Ch. They see thee, and me the hapless mother reft of her children.

Ad. Bring near the blood boltered corpses of those hapless chiefs, foully slain by foes unworthy with whom lay the decision of the contest

Ch. Let me embrace and hold my children to my bosom in my enfolding arms.

Ad. There there! thou hast—

Ch. Sorrows heavy enough to bear

Ad. Ah me!

Ch. Thy groans mingle with those of their parents.

Ad. Hear me

Ch. O er both of us thou dost lament

Ad. Would God the Theban ranks had laid me dead in the dust!

Ch. Oh that I had never been wedded to a husband!

Ad. Ah! hapless mothers, behold this sea of troubles!

Ch. Our nails have ploughed our cheeks in furrows, and o'er our heads have we strewn ashes.

Ad. Ah me! ah me! Oh that earth's floor would swallow me, or the whirlwind snatch me away or Zeus flaming bolt descend upon my head!

Ch. Bitter the marriages thou didst witness, bitter the oracle of Phoebus! The curse of Œdipus, fraught with sorrow after desolating his house is come on thee.

Th. I meant to question thee when thou wert venting thy lamentations to the host but I will let it pass yet, though I dropped the matter then and left it alone I now do ask Adrastus, Of what lineage sprang those youths, to shine so bright in chivalry? Tell it to our younger citizens of thy fuller wisdom for thou art skilled to know Myself beheld their daring deeds, too high for words to tell where by they thought to capture Thebes. One question will I spare thee, lest I provoke thy laughter the foe that each of them encountered in the fray the spear from which each received his death wound These be idle tales alike for those who hear or him who speaks, that any man amid the fray when clouds of darts are hurtling before his eyes, should declare for certain who each champion is. I could not ask such questions, nor yet believe those who dare assert th like for when a man is face to face with the foe, he scarce can see even that which tis his bounden duty to observe.

[1] A line is missing here.

[2] Lacuna in the MS.

mother bore in days long past that daughter of Inachus!

Semi Ch I O be gracious I pray and champion this city!

Semi Ch II 'Tis thy own darling thy own settler in the city of Argos that I am striving to rescue for the funeral pyre from outrageous insult

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger Ladies I bring you tidings of great joy myself escaped—for I was taken prisoner in the battle which cost those chieftains seven their lives near Dirce s fount—to bear the news of Theseus victory But I will save thee tedious questioning I was the servant of Capaneus whom Zeus with scorching bolt to ashes burnt

Ch Friend of friends fair thy news of thy own return nor less the news about Theseus and if the host of Athens too is safe welcome will all thy message be

Me Tis safe, and all hath happened as I would it had befallen Adrastus and his Argives whom from Inachus he led to march against the city of the Cadmeans

Ch How did the son of Ægeus and his fellow warriors raise their trophy to Zeus? Tell us for thou wert there and canst gladden us who were not

Me Bright shone the sun one levelled line of light upon the world as by Electra s gate I stood to watch from a turret with a far outlook And lo! I saw the host in three divisions deploying its mail clad warriors on the high ground by the banks of Ismenus this last I heard and with them was the king himself famous son of Ægeus his own men natives of old Cecropia were ranged upon the right while on the left hard by the fountain of Ares were the dwellers by the sea harnessed spearmen they on either wing were posted cavalry in equal numbers and chariots were stationed in the shelter of Amphion s holy tomb Meantime the folk of Cadmus set themselves before the walls, placing in the rear the bodies for which they fought Horse to horse and car to car stood ranged Then did the herald of Theseus cry aloud to all Be still ye folk! hush ye ranks of Cadmus hearken! we are come to fetch the bodies of the slain wishing to bury them in observance of the universal law of Hellas no wish have we to lengthen out the slaughter Not a word would Creon let his herald answer back but there he stood in silence under arms Then did the drivers of the four horse cars begin the fray on past each other they drave their chariots bringing the warriors at their sides up into line Some fought with swords some wheeled the horses back to the fray again for those they drove Now when Phorbas who captained the cavalry of the Erechthidæ saw the thronging chariots he and they who had the charge of the Theban horse met hand to hand and by turns were victors and vanquished The many horrors happening there I saw not merely heard about for I was at the spot where the chariots and their riders met and fought but which to tell of first I know not —the clouds of dust that mounted to the sky the warriors tangled in the reins and dragged this way and that the streams of crimson gore, when men fell dead or when from shattered chariot seats, they tumbled headlong to the ground and mid the splinters of their cars gave up the ghost But Creon when he marked our cavalry s success on one wing caught up a shield and rushed into the fray ere that despondency should seize his men but not for that did Theseus recoil in fear no! snatching up at once his glittering harness he hied him on And the twain clashing their shields together as they met in the midst of the assembled host were dealing death and courting it shouting loudly each to his fellow the battle cry Slay and with thy spear strike home against the sons of Erechtheus Fierce foes to cope with were the warriors whom the dragon s teeth to manhood reared so fierce they broke our left wing albeit theirs was routed by our right and put to flight so that the struggle was evenly balanced Here again our chief deserved all praise for this success was not the only advantage he gained no! next he sought that part of his army which was wavering and loud he called to them that the earth rang again My sons if ye cannot restrain the earth born warriors stubborn spear the cause of Pallas is lost His word inspired new courage in all the Danaid host Therewith himself did seize a fearsome mace weapon of Epidaurian warfare and swung it to and fro and with that club as with a sickle he shore off necks and heads and helmets thereupon Scarce even then they turned themselves to fly For joy cried I and danced and clapped my hands while to the gates they ran Throughout the town echoed the shrieks of young and old as they crowded the temples in terror But Theseus when he might have come inside the walls, held back his men for he had not come said he to sack the town but to ask for the bodies of the dead Such the general men should choose one who shows his bravery in danger yet hates the pride of those that in their hour of fortune lose the bliss they might have enjoyed through seeking to scale the ladder s topmost step

Ch Now do I believe in the gods after seeing this unexpected day and I feel my woes are lighter now that these have paid their penalty

Ad O Zeus why do men assert the wisdom of the wretched human race? On thee we all depend and all we do is only what thou listest We thought our Argos irresistible ourselves a young and lusty host and so when Eteocles was for making terms in spite of his fair offer we would not accept them and so we perished Then in their turn those foolish folk of Cadmus to fortune raised like some beggar with his newly gotten wealth waxed wanton and waxing so were ruined in their turn Ye foolish sons of men! who strain your bow like men who shoot beyond their mark and only by suffering many evils as ye deserve though deaf to friends yet yield to circumstances ye cities likewise though ye might by parley end your mischief yet ye choose the sword instead of reason to settle all disputes But wherefore these reflections? This I fain would learn the

the shade, and each, I wot, his human ... smitten ... I see ... and Evadne, the daughter of king Iphis. Wherefore stands she on the towering rock, which overhangs this temple, advancing along yon path?

Enter EVADNE on a rock above the pyre of Capaneus.

Evadne What light, what radiancy did the sun-god's car dart forth, and the moon athwart the firmament, while round her in the gloom swift stars careered, in the day that the city of Argos raised the stately chant of joy at my wedding, in honour of my marriage with mail-clad Capaneus? Now from my home in frantic haste with frenzied mind I rush to join thee, seeking to share with thee the fire's bright flame and the self-same tomb, to rid me of my weary life in Hades' halls, and of the pains of existence; yea, for 'tis the sweetest end to share the death of those we love, if only fate will sanction it.

Ch. Behold yon pyre, which thou art overlooking, nigh thereto, set apart for Zeus! There is thy husband's body, vanquished by the blazing bolt.

Ev. Life's goal I now behold from my station here; may fortune aid me in my headlong leap from this rock in honour's cause, down into the fire below, to mix my ashes in the ruddy blaze with my husband's, to lay me side by side with him, there in the couch of Persephone; for ne'er will I, to save my life, prove untrue to thee where thou liest in thy grave. Away with life and marriage too! Oh! may my children live to see the dawn of a fairer, happier wedding-day in Argos! May loyalty inspire the husband's heart, his nature fused with his wife's!

Ch. Lo! the aged Iphis, thy father, draweth nigh to hear thy startling scheme, which yet he knows not and will grieve to learn.

Enter IPHIS.

Iphis Unhappy child! lo! I am come, a poor old man, with twofold sorrow in my house to mourn, that I may carry to his native land the corpse of my son Eteocles, slain by the Theban spear, and further in quest of my daughter who rushed headlong from the house, for she was the wife of Capaneus and longed with him to die. Ere this she was well guarded in my house, but, when I took the watch away in the present troubles, she escaped. But I feel sure that she is here; tell me if ye have seen her.

Ev. Why question them? Lo, here upon the rock, father, o'er the pyre of Capaneus, like some bird I hover lightly in my wretchedness.

I. What wind hath blown thee hither, child? Whither away? Why didst thou pass the threshold of my house and seek this land?

Ev. It would but anger thee to hear what I intend, and so I fain would keep thee ignorant, my father.

I. What! hath not thy own father a right to know?

Ev. Thou wouldst not wisely judge my intention.

I. Why dost thou deck thyself in that apparel?

Ev. A purport strange this robe conveys, father.

I. Thou hast no look of mourning for thy lord.

Ev. No, the reason why I thus am decked is strange, maybe.

I. Dost thou in such garb appear before a funeral pyre?

Ev. Yea, for hither it is I come to take the meed of victory.

I. "Victory!" what victory? This would I learn of thee.

Ev. A victory o'er all women on whom the sun looks down.

I. In Athena's handiwork or in prudent counsel?

Ev. In bravery; for I will lay me down and die with my lord.

I. What dost thou say? What is this silly riddle thou propoundest?

Ev. To yonder pyre where lies dead Capaneus, I will leap down.

I. My daughter, speak not thus before the multitude!

Ev. The very thing I wish, that every Argive should learn it.

I. Nay, I will ne'er consent to let thee do this deed.

Ev. (*As she is throwing herself*) 'Tis all one; thou shalt never catch me in thy grasp. Lo! I cast me down, no joy to thee, but to myself and to my husband blazing on the pyre with me.

Ch. O lady, what a fearful deed!

I. Ah me! I am undone, ye dames of Argos!

Ch. Alack, alack! a cruel blow is this to thee, but thou must yet witness, poor wretch, the full *horror* of this deed.

I. A more unhappy wretch than me ye could not find.

Ch. Woe for thee, unhappy man! Thou, old sir, hast been made partaker in the fortune of Œdipus, thou and my poor city too.

I. Ah, why are mortal men denied this boon, to live their youth twice o'er, and twice in turn to reach old age? If aught goes wrong within our homes, we set it right by judgment more maturely formed, but our life we *may not* so correct. Now if we had a second spell of youth and age, this double term of life would let us then correct each previous slip. I, for instance, seeing others blest with children, longed to have them too, and found my ruin in that wish. Whereas *if I had had* my present experience, and by a father's light had learnt how cruel a thing it is to be bereft of children, never should I have fallen on such evil days as these—I who did beget a brave young son, proud parent that I was, and after all am now bereft of him. Enough of this. *What remains* for such a hapless wretch as me? Shall I to my home, there to see its utter desolation and the blank within my life? or shall I to the halls of that dead Capaneus?—halls I smiled to see in days gone by, when yet my daughter was alive. But she is lost and gone, she that would ever draw down my cheek to her lips, and take my head between her hands; for naught is there *more* sweet unto an aged sire than a daughter's love; our sons are made of sterner stuff, but less winning are their caresses. Oh! take me to my house at once, in darkness hide me there, to waste and fret this aged frame with fasting! What

Ad Hearken then For in giving this task to me thou findest a willing eulogist of friends whose praise I would declare in all truth and sincerity Dost see yon corpse by Zeus bolt transfixed? That is Capaneus though he had ample wealth yet was he the last to boast of his prosperity nor would he ever vaunt himself above a poorer neighbour but shunned the man whose sumptuous board had puffed him up too high and made him scorn mere competence for he held that virtue lies not in greedy gluttony but that moderate means suffice True friend was he alike to present or to absent friends the same of such the number is not great His was a guileless character a courteous address that left no promise unperformed either towards his own household or his fellow citizens The next I name is Eteocles a master he of other kinds of excellence young nor richly dowered with store yet high in honour in the Argive land And though his friends oft offered gifts of gold he would not have it in his house to make his character its slave by taking wealth s yoke upon him Not his city but those that sinned against her did he hate for a city is no wise to be blamed if it get an evil name by reason of an evil governor Such another was Hippomedon third of all this band from his very boyhood he refrained from turning towards the allurements of the Muses to lead a life of ease his home was in the fields and gladly would he school his nature to hardships with a view to manliness aye hasting to the chase rejoicing in his steeds or straining of his bow because he would make himself of use unto his state Next behold the huntress Atalanta s son Parthenopæus a youth of peerless beauty from Arcady he came even to the streams of Inachus and in Argos spent his boyhood There when he grew to man s estate first as is the duty of strangers settled in another land he showed no pique or jealousy against the state became no quibbler chiefest source of annoyance citizen or stranger can give but took his stand amid the host and fought for Argos as he were her own son glad at heart whenso the city prospered deeply grieved if e er reverses came many a lover though he had midst men and maids yet was he careful to avoid offence Of Tydeus next the lofty praise I will express in brief no brilliant spokesman he, but a clever craftsman in the art of war with many a shrewd device inferior in judgment to his brother Meleager yet through his warrior skill lending his name to equal praise for he had found in arms a perfect science his was an ambitious nature a spirit rich in store of deeds with words less fully dowered From this account then wonder not Theseus that they dared to die before the towers for noble nurture carries honour with it and every man when once he hath practised virtue scorns the name of villain Courage may be learnt for even a babe doth learn to speak and hear things it cannot comprehend and whatso er a child hath learnt this it is his wont to treasure up till he is old So train up your children in a virtuous way

Ch Alas! my son to sorrow I bare thee and carried thee within my womb enduring the pangs of travail but now Hades takes the fruit of all my hapless toil and I that had a son am left ah me! with none to nurse my age

Th As for the noble son of Œcleus him while yet he lived the gods snatched hence to the bowels of the earth and his chariot too manifestly blessing him while I myself may truthfully tell the praises of the son of Œdipus that is Polynices for he was my guest friend ere he left the town of Cadmus and crossed to Argos in voluntary exile But dost thou know what I would have thee do in this matter?

Ad I know naught save this—to yield obedience to thy hests

Th As for yon Capaneus stricken by the bolt of Zeus—

Ad Wilt bury him apart as a consecrated corpse?

Th Even so but all the rest on one funeral pyre

Ad Where wilt thou set the tomb apart for him?

Th Here near this temple have I builded him a sepulchre

Ad Thy thralls forthwith must undertake this toil

Th Myself will look to those others let the biers advance

Ad Approach your sons unhappy mothers

Th This thy proposal Adrastus is anything but good

Ad Must not the mothers touch their sons?

Th It would kill them to see how they are altered

Ad Tis bitter truly to see the dead even at the moment of death

Th Why then wilt thou add fresh grief to them?

Ad Thou art right Ye needs must patiently abide for the words of Theseus are good But when we have committed them unto the flames ye shall collect their bones O wretched sons of men! Why do ye get you weapons and bring slaughter on one another? Cease therefrom give o er your toils and in mutual peace keep safe your cities Short is the span of life so twere best to run its course as lightly as we may from trouble free

Ch No more a happy mother I with children blest no more I share among Argive women who have sons their happy lot nor any more will Artemis in the hour of travail kindly greet these childless mothers Most dreary is my life and like some wandering cloud I drift before the howling blast The seven noblest sons in Argos once we had we seven hapless mothers but now my sons are dead, I have no child and on me steals old age in piteous wise nor mongst the dead nor mongst the living do I count myself having as it were a lot apart from these Tears alone are left me in my house sad memories of my son are stored mournful tresses shorn from his head chaplets that he wore libations for the dead departed and songs but not such as golden haired Apollo welcometh and when I wake to weep my tears will ever drench the folds of my robe upon my bosom Ah! there I see the sepulchre ready even now for Capaneus his consecrated tomb and the votive offerings Theseus gives unto the dead outside

slaughter of your dead sires thou too Ægialeus, shalt take thy father's place and in thy youth command the host, and with thee Tydeus' son marching from Ætolia—him whom his father named Diomedes. Soon as the beard your cheeks o'ershadow must ye lead an armed Danaid host against the battlements of Thebes with sevenfold gates. For to their sorrow shall ye come like lion's whelps in full grown might to sack their city. No otherwise is it to be; and ye shall be a theme for minstrels' songs in days to come, known through Hellas as "the After-born"; so famous shall your expedition be, thanks to Heaven.

Th. Queen Athena, I will hearken to thy bidding; for thou it is dost set me up, so that I go not astray. And I will bind this monarch by an oath; do thou but guide my steps aright. For if thou art friendly to our state, we shall henceforth live secure.

Ch. Let us go, Adrastus, and take the oath to this monarch and his state; for the service they have already done us claims our warm regard.

Exeunt OMNES.

shall it avail me to touch my daughter s bones? Old age resistless foe how do I loathe thy presence! Them too I hate whoso desire to lengthen out the span of life seeking to turn the tide of death aside by philtres drugs and magic spells—folk that death should take away to leave the young their place when they no more can benefit the world

Ch Woe woe! Behold your dead sons bones are brought hither take them servants of your weak old mistress for in me is no strength left by reason of my mourning for my sons time s comrade long *have I been and many a tear for many a sorrow* have I shed For what sharper pang wilt thou ever find for mortals than the sight of children dead?

Enter CHILDREN *of slain chiefs*

Children Poor mother mine behold I bring my father s bones gathered from the fire a burden grief has rendered heavy though this tiny urn contains my all

Ch Ah me! ah me! Why bear thy tearful load to the fond mother of the dead a handful of ashes in the stead of those who erst were men of mark in Mycenæ?

Chil Woe worth the hour! woe worth the day! Reft of my hapless sire a wretched orphan shall I inherit a desolate house torn from my father s arms

Ch Woe is thee! Where is now the toil I spent *upon my sons? what thank have I for nightly watch?* Where the mother s nursing care? the sleepless vigils mine eyes have kept? the loving kiss upon my children s brow?

Chil Thy sons are dead and gone Poor mother! dead and gone the boundless air now wraps them round

Ch Turned to ashes by the flame they have winged their flight to Hades

Chil Father thou hearest thy children s lamentation say shall I e er as warrior dight avenge thy slaughter?

Ch God grant it O my child!

Chil Some day if god so will shall the avenging of my father be my task not yet this sorrow sleeps

Ch Alas! Fortune s sorrows are enough for me I have troubles and to spare already

Chil Shall Asopus laughing tide ever reflect my brazen arms as I lead on my Argive troops?

Ch To avenge thy fallen sire

Chil Methinks I see thee still before my eyes my father—

Ch Printing a loving kiss upon thy cheek

Chil But thy words of exhortation are borne on the winds away

Ch Two mourners hath he left behind thy mother and thee bequeathing to thee an endless legacy of grief for thy father

Chil The weight of grief I have to bear hath crushed me utterly

Ch Come let me clasp the ashes of my son to my bosom

Chil I weep to hear that piteous word it stabs me to the heart

Ch My child thou art undone no more shall I behold thee thy own fond mother s treasure.

Th Adrastus and ye dames from Argos sprung ye see these children bearing in their hands th bodies of their valiant sires whom I redeemed to thee I give these gifts I and Athens And ye must bear in mind the memory of this favour marking well the treatment ye have had of me And to these children I repeat the self same words that they may honour this city to children s children ever handing on the kindness ye received from us Be Zeus *the witness with the gods in heaven of the treat*ment we vouchsafed you ere you left us

Ad Theseus well we know all the kindness thou hast conferred upon the land of Argos in her need and ours shall be a gratitude that never waxeth old for your generous treatment makes us debtors for a like return

Th What yet remains wherein I can serve you?

Ad Fare thee well for such is thy desert and such thy city s too

Th Even so Mayst thou too have the self same fortune!

ATHENA *appears above temple*

Athena Hearken Theseus to the words that I Athena utter telling thee thy duty which if thou perform it will serve thy city Give not these bones *to the children to carry to the land of Argos* letting them go so lightly nay take first an oath of them that they will requite thee and thy city for your efforts This oath must Adrastus swear for as their king it is his right to take the oath for the whole realm of Argos And this shall be the form thereof We Argives swear we never will against this land lead on our mail-clad troops to war and if others come we will repel them But if they violate their oath and come against the city pray that the land of Argos may be miserably destroyed Now hearken while I tell thee where thou must slay the victims Thou hast within thy halls a tripod with brazen feet which Heracles in days gone by after he had o er thrown the foundations of Ilium and was startin on another enterprise enjoined thee to set up at the Pythian shrine O er it cut the throats of three sheep then grave within the tripod s hollow belly the oath this done deliver it to the god who watches over Delphi to keep a witness and memorial unto Hellas of the oath And bury the sharp-edged knife wherewith thou shalt have laid the victims open and shed their blood deep in the bowels of the earth *hard by the pyres where the seven chieftains burn* for its appearance shall strike them with dismay if e er against thy town they come and shall cause them to return with sorrow When thou hast done all this dismiss the dead from thy land And to the god resign as sacred land the spot where their bodies *were purified by fire there by the meeting* of the triple roads that lead unto the Isthmus Thus much to thee Theseus, I address next to the sons of Argos I speak when ye are grown to men s estate the town beside Ismenus shall ye sack avenging the

Po. While yet they stay on shore, or as they cross the briny deep?

A. When they have set sail from Ilium for their homes. On them will Zeus also send his rain and fearful hail, and inky tempests from the sky; yea, and he promises to grant me his lightning bolts to hurl on the Achæans and fire their ships. And do thou, for thy part, make the Ægean strait to roar with mighty billows and whirlpools, and fill Eubœa's hollow bay with corpses, that Achæans may learn henceforth to reverence my temples and regard all other deities.

Po. So shall it be, for the boon thou cravest needs but few words. I will vex the broad Ægean sea; and the beach of Myconus and the reefs round Delos, Scyros and Lemnos too, and the cliffs of Caphareus shall be strown with many a corpse. Mount thou to Olympus, and taking from thy father's hand his lightning bolts, keep careful watch against the hour when Argos' host lets slip its cables. A fool is he who sacks the towns of men, with shrines and tombs, the dead man's hallowed home, for at the last he makes a desert round himself and dies. *Exeunt*

Hecuba (*Awakening*) Lift thy head, unhappy lady, from the ground; thy neck upraise; this is Troy no more, no longer am I queen in Ilium. Though fortune change, endure thy lot; sail with the stream, and follow fortune's tack, steer not thy barque of life against the tide, since chance must guide thy course. Ah me! ah me! What else but tears is now my hapless lot, whose country, children, husband all are lost? Ah! the high blown pride of ancestors! how cabined now! how brought to nothing after all! What woe must I suppress, or what declare? What plaintive dirge shall I awake? Ah, woe is me! the anguish I suffer lying here stretched upon this pallet hard! O my head, my temples, my side! Ah! could I but turn over, and lie now on this, now on that, to rest my back and spine, while ceaselessly my tearful wail ascends. For even this is music to the wretched, to chant their cheerless dirge of sorrow.

Ye swift prowed ships, rowed to sacred Ilium o'er the deep dark sea, past the fair havens of Hellas, to the flute's ill omened music and the dulcet voice of pipes, even to the bays of Troyland (alack the day!), wherein ye tied your hawsers, twisted handwork from Egypt, in quest of that hateful wife of Menelaus, who brought disgrace on Castor and on Eurotas foul reproach, murderess she of Priam, sire of fifty children, the cause why I, the hapless Hecuba, have wrecked my life upon this troublous strand. Oh that I should sit here o'er against the tent of Agamemnon! Forth from my home to slavery they hale my aged frame, while from my head in piteous wise the hair is shorn for grief. Ah! hapless wives of those mail-clad sons of Troy! Ah! poor maidens, luckless brides, come weep, for Ilium is now but a smouldering ruin; and I like some mother bird that o'er her fledgelings screams, will begin the strain; how different from that song I sang to the gods in days long past, as I leaned on Priam's staff, and beat with my foot in Phrygian tune to lead the dance!

Enter CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN

Semi Chorus I O Hecuba! why these cries, these piercing shrieks? What mean thy words? For I heard thy piteous wail echo through the building, and a pang of terror shoots through each captive Trojan's breast, as pent within these walls they mourn their slavish lot.

Hec My child, even now the hands of Argive rowers are busy at their ships.

Semi Ch I Ah, woe is me! what is their intent? Will they really bear me hence in sorrow from my country in their fleet?

Hec I know not, though I guess our doom.

Semi Ch I O misery! woe to us Trojan dames, soon to hear the order given, "Come forth from the house; the Argives are preparing to return."

Hec Oh! do not bid the wild Cassandra leave her chamber, the frantic prophetess, for Argives to insult, nor to my griefs add yet another. Woe to thee, ill fated Troy, thy sun is set; and woe to thy unhappy children, quick and dead alike, who are leaving thee behind!

Semi Chorus II With trembling step, alas! I leave this tent of Agamemnon to learn of thee, my royal mistress, whether the Argives have resolved to take my wretched life, whether the sailors at the prow are making ready to ply their oars.

Hec My child, a fearful dread seized on my wakeful heart and sent me hither.

Semi Ch. II Hath a herald from the Danai already come? To whom am I, poor captive, given as a slave?

Hec Thou art not far from being allotted now.

Semi Ch II Woe worth the day! What Argive or Phthiotian chief will bear me far from Troy, alas! unto his home, or haply to some island fastness?

Hec Ah me! ah me! Whose slave shall I become in my old age? in what far clime? a poor old drone, the wretched copy of a corpse, set to keep the gate or tend their children, I who once held royal rank in Troy.

Ch Woe, woe is thee! What piteous dirge wilt thou devise to mourn the outrage done thee? No more through Ida's looms shall I ply the shuttle to and fro. I look my last and latest on my children's bodies; henceforth shall I endure surpassing misery; it may be as the unwilling bride of some Hellene (perish the night and fortune that brings me to this!); it may be as a wretched slave I from Peirene's sacred fount shall draw their store of water.

Oh! be it ours to come to Theseus' famous realm, a land of joy! Never, never let me see Eurotas' swirling tide, hateful home of Helen, there to meet and be the slave of Menelaus, whose hand laid Troyland waste! Yon holy land by Peneus fed, nestling in all its beauty at Olympus' foot, is said, so have I heard, to be a very granary of wealth and teeming fruitage; next to the sacred soil of Theseus I could wish to reach that land. They tell me too Hephæstus' home beneath the shadow of Ætna, fronting Phœnicia, the mother of Sicilian hills, is famous for the crowns it gives to worth. Oh! may I find a home

THE TROJAN WOMEN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

POSEIDON	TALTHYBIUS
ATHENA	CASSANDRA
HECUBA	ANDROMACHE
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN	MENELAUS
	HELEN

Before Agamemnon s Tent in the Camp near Troy
HECUBA *asleep Enter* POSEIDON

Poseidon Lo! from the depths of salt Ægean floods I Poseidon come where choirs of Nereids trip in the mazes of the graceful dance for since the day that Phœbus and myself with measurement exact set towers of stone about this land of Troy and ringed it round never from my heart hath passed away a kindly feeling for my Phrygian town which now is smouldering and o erthrown a prey to Argive prowess For from his home beneath Parnassus Phocian Epeus aided by the craft of Pallas framed a horse to bear within its womb an armed host and sent it within the battlements fraught with death whence in days to come men shall tell of the wooden horse with its hidden load of warriors Groves forsaken stand and temples of the gods run down with blood and at the altar s very base before the god who watched his home lies Priam dead While to Achæan ships great store of gold and Phrygian spoils are being conveyed and they who came against this town those sons of Hellas only wait a favouring breeze to follow in their wake that after ten long years they may with joy behold their wives and children Vanquished by Hera Argive goddess and by Athena who helped to ruin Phrygia I am leaving Ilium that famous town and the altars that I love for when drear desolation seizes on a town the worship of the god decays and tends to lose respect Scamander s banks re echo long and loud the screams of captive maids as they by lot receive their masters Arcadia taketh some and some the folk of Thessaly others are assigned to Theseus sons the Athenian chiefs And such of the Trojan dames as are not portioned out are in these tents set apart for the leaders of the host and with them Spartan Helen daughter of Tyndarus justly counted among the captives And wouldst thou see that queen of misery Hecuba thou canst for there she lies before the gates weeping many a bitter tear for many a tribulation for at Achilles tomb—though she knows not this—her daughter Polyxena has died most piteously likewise is Priam dead and her children too Cassandra whom the king Apollo left to be a virgin frenzied maid hath Agamemnon in contempt of the god s ordinance and of piety forced to a dishonoured wedlock Farewell O city prosperous once! farewell ye ramparts of hewn stone! had not Pallas daughter of Zeus decreed thy ruin thou wert standing firmly still

Enter ATHENA

Athena May I address the mighty god whom Heaven reveres and who to my own sire is very nigh in blood laying aside our former enmity?

Po Thou mayst for o er the soul the ties of kin exert no feeble spell great queen Athena

At For thy forgiving mood my thanks! Somewhat have I to impart affecting both thyself and me O king

Po Bringst thou fresh tidings from some god from Zeus or from some lesser power?

At From none of these but on behalf of Troy whose soil we tread am I come to seek thy mighty aid to make it one with mine

Po What! hast thou laid thy former hate aside to take compassion on the town now that it is burnt to ashes?

At First go back to the former point wilt thou make common cause with me in the scheme I purpose?

Po Ay surely but I would fain learn thy wishes whether thou art come to help Achæans or Phrygians

At I wish to give my former foes the Trojans joy and on the Achæan host impose a return that they will rue

Po Why leap st thou thus from mood to mood? Thy love and hate both go too far on whomsoever centred

At Dost not know the insult done to me and to the shrine I love?

Po Surely in the hour that Aias tore Cassandra thence

At Yea and the Achæans did naught said naught to him

Po And yet twas by thy mighty aid they sacked Ilium

At For which cause I would join with thee to work their bane

Po My powers are ready at thy will What is thy intent?

At A returning fraught with woe will I impose on them

torch for men, but piteous is the flame thou kindlest here, beyond my blackest bodings. Ah my child! how little did I ever dream that such would be thy marriage a captive and of Argos too! Give up the torch to me thou dost not bear its blaze aright in thy wild frantic course, nor have thy afflictions left thee in thy sober senses, but still art thou as frantic as before Take in those torches, Trojan friends, and for her wedding madrigals weep your tears instead

Ca O mother crown my head with victor's wreaths rejoice in my royal match lead me to my lord nay if thou find me loth at all thrust me there by force for if Loxias be indeed a prophet Agamemnon, that famous king of the Achæans will find in me a bride more fraught with woe to him than Helen. For I will slay him and lay waste his home to avenge my father and my brethren's death But of the deed itself I will not speak nor will I tell of that axe which shall sever my neck and the necks of others, or of the conflict ending in a mother's death, which my marriage shall cause nor of the overthrow of Atreus house but I for all my frenzy will so far rise above my frantic fit that I will prove this city happier far than those Achæans, who for the sake of one woman and one man's love of her have lost a countless host in seeking Helen Their captain too, whom men call wise hath lost for what he hated most what most he prized yielding to his brother for a woman's sake—and she a willing prize whom no man forced—the joy he had of his own child en in his home. For from the day that they did land upon Scamander's strand their doom began, not for loss of stolen frontier nor yet for father land with frowning towers whomso Ares slew those never saw their babes again nor were they shrouded for the tomb by hand of wife but in a foreign land they lie. At home the case was still the same wives were dying widows, parents were left childless in their homes, having reared their son for others, and none is left to make libations of blood upon the ground before their tombs. Truly to such praise as this their host can make ample claim 'Tis better to pass their shame in silence by nor be mine the Muse to tell that evil tale. But the Trojans were dying first for their fatherland fairest fame to win whomso the sword laid low all these found friends to bear their bodies home and were laid to rest in the bosom of their native land their funeral rites all duly paid by duteous hands. And all such Phrygians as escaped the warrior's death lived ever day by day with wife and child en by them—joys the Achæans had left behind As for Hector and his griefs, prithee hear how stands the case he is dead and gone but still his fame remains as bravest of the brave, and this was a result of the Achæans coming for had they remained at home his worth would have gone unnoticed So too with Paris, he married the daughter of Zeus, whereas, had he never done so, the alliance he made in his family would have been forgotten. Whoso is wise should fly from making war but if he be brought to this pass, a noble death will crown his city with glory a coward's end with shame Wherefore mother mine thou shouldst not pity thy country or my spousal for this my marriage will destroy those whom thou and I most hate.

Ch How sweetly at thy own sad lot thou smilest chanting a strain which spite of thee may prove thee wrong!

Ta Had not Apollo turned thy wits astray thou shouldst not for nothing have sent my chiefs with such ominous predictions forth on their way But after all, these lofty minds, reputed wise are nothing better than those that are held as naught For that mighty king, of all Hellas, own son of Atreus, has yielded to a passion for this mad maiden of all others though I am poor enough yet would I never have chosen such a wife as this. As for thee since thy senses are not whole I give thy taunts gainst Argos and thy praise of Troy to the winds to carry away Follow me now to the ships to grace the wedding of our chief. And thou too follow whensoever the son of Laertes demands thy presence, for thou wilt serve a mistress most discreet, as all declare who came to Ilium.

Ca A clever fellow this menial! Why is it heralds hold the name they do? All men unite in hating with one common hate the servants who attend on kings or governments. Thou sayest my mother shall come to the halls of Odysseus where then be Apollo's words, so clear to me in their interpretation which declare that here she shall die? What else remains I will not taunt her with. Little knows he the luckless wight the sufferings that await him or how these ills I and my Phrygians endure shall one day seem to him precious as gold For beyond the ten long years spent at Troy he shall drag out other ten and then come to his country all alone by the route where fell Charybdis lurks in a narrow channel twixt the rocks past Cyclops the savage shepherd and Ligurian Circe that turneth men to swine shipwrecked oft upon the salt sea wave fain to eat the lotus and the sacred cattle of the sun whose flesh shall utter in the days to come a human voice, fraught with misery to Odysseus. But to briefly end this history he shall descend alive to Hades, and though he scape the waters flood yet shall he find a thousand troubles in his home when he arrives. Enough! why do I recount the troubles of Odysseus? Lead on that I forthwith may wed my husband for his home in Hades halls. Base thou art and basely shalt thou be buried in the dead of night when day is done, thou captain of that host of Danai who thinkest so proudly of thy fortune! Yea and my corpse cast forth in nakedness shall the rocky chasm with its flood of wintry waters give to wild beasts to make their meal upon hard by my husband's tomb me the handmaid of Apollo Farewell, ye garlands of that god most dear to me! farewell, ye mystic symbols! I here resign you feasts, my joy in days gone by Go I tear you from my body that while yet mine honour is intact, I may give them to the rushing winds to waft to thee my prince of prophecy! Where is yon general's ship? Whither must I go

on that shore which lieth very nigh Ionia s sea a land by Crathis watered lovely stream that dyes the hair an auburn tint feeding with its holy waves and making glad therewith the home of heroes good and true

But mark! a herald from the host of Danai with store of fresh proclamations comes hasting hither What is his errand? what saith he? List for we are slaves to Dorian lords henceforth

Enter TALTHYBIUS

Talthybius Hecuba thou knowest me from my many journeys to and fro as herald twixt the Achæan host and Troy no stranger I to thee lady even aforetime I Talthybius now sent with a fresh message

Hec Ah kind friends tis come! what I so long have dreaded

Ta The lot has decided your fates already if that was what you feared

Hec Ah me! What city didst thou say Thessalian Phthian or Cadmean?

Ta Each warrior took his prize in turn ye were not all at once assigned

Hec To whom hath the lot assigned us severally? Which of us Trojan dames doth a happy fortune await?

Ta I know but ask thy questions separately not all at once

Hec Then tell me whose prize is my daughter hapless Cassandra?

Ta King Agamemnon hath chosen her out for himself

Hec To be the slave girl of his Spartan wife? Ah me!

Ta Nay to share with him his stealthy love

Hec What! Phœbus virgin priestess to whom the god with golden locks granted the boon of maidenhood?

Ta The dart of love hath pierced his heart love for the frenzied maid

Hec Daughter cast from thee the sacred keys and from thy body tear the holy wreaths that drape thee in their folds

Ta Why! is it not an honour high that she should win our monarch s love?

Hec What have ye done to her whom late ye took from me—my child?

Ta Dost mean Polyxena or whom dost thou inquire about?

Hec To whom hath the lot assigned her?

Ta To minister at Achilles tomb hath been appointed her

Hec Woe is me! I the mother of a dead man s slave! What custom what ordinance is this amongst Hellenes good sir?

Ta Count thy daughter happy tis well with her

Hec What wild words are these? say is she still alive?

Ta Her fate is one that sets her free from trouble

Hec And what of mail clad Hector s wife sad Andromache? declare her fate

Ta She too was a chosen prize Achilles son did take her

Hec As for me whose hair is white with age, who need to hold a staff to be to me a third foot whose servant am I to be?

Ta Odysseus king of Ithaca hath taken thee to be his slave

Hec O God! Now smite the close shorn head! tear your cheeks with your nails God help me! I have fallen as a slave to a treacherous foe I hate a monster of lawlessness one that by his double tongue hath turned against us all that once was friendly in his camp changing this for that and that for this again Oh weep for me ye Trojan dames! Undone! undone and lost! ah woe! a victim to a most unhappy lot!

Ch Thy fate royal mistress now thou knowest but for me what Hellene or Achæan is master of my destiny?

Ta Ho servants! haste and bring Cassandra forth to me here that I may place her in our captain s hands and then conduct to the rest of the chiefs the captives each hath had assigned Ha! what is the blaze of torches there within? What do these Trojan dames? Are they firing the chambers because they must leave this land and be carried away to Argos? Are they setting themselves aflame in their longing for death? Of a truth the free bear their troubles in cases like this with a stiff neck Ho there! open! lest their deed which suits them well but finds small favour with the Achæans bring blame on me

Hec Tis not that they are setting aught ablaze but my child Cassandra frenzied maid comes rushing wildly hither

Enter CASSANDRA *carrying torches*

Cassandra Bring the light uplift and show its flame! I am doing the god s service see! see! making his shrine to glow with tapers bright O Hymen king of marriage! blest is the bridegroom blest am I also the maiden soon to wed a princely lord in Argos Hail Hymen king of marriage! Since thou my mother art ever busied with tears and lamentations in thy mourning for my father s death and for our country dear I at my own nuptials am making this torch to blaze and show its light in thy honour O Hymen king of marriage! Grant thy light too Hecate at the maiden s wedding as the custom is. Nimbly lift the foot aloft lead on the dance with cries of joy as if to greet my father s happy fate To dance I hold a sacred duty come Phœbus lead the way for tis in thy temple mid thy bay trees that I minister Hail Hymen god of marriage! Hymen hail! Come mother mine and join the dance link thy steps with me and circle in the gladsome measure now here now there Salute the bride on her wedding-day with hymns and cries of joy Come ye maids of Phrygia in raiment fair sing my marriage with the husband fate ordains that I should wed

Ch Hold the frantic maiden royal mistress mine lest with nimble foot she rush to the Argive army

Hec Thou god of fire tis thine to light the bridal

An. Misery!

Hec. Piteous the fate—

An. Of our city

Hec. Smouldering in the sm ke.

An. Com my husband come to me!

Hec. Ah hapless w ! thou callest on my son who lieth in the tomb

An. Thy wife s defender com !

Hec. Do thou, who erst didst make the Achæans grieve, eldest of the sons I bare to Priam n the days gone b take me to thy rest in Hades halls!

An. B tter are these regrets, unhappy moth r bi er these woes to bear our c ty ruined and sor row evermore to sorrow added th ough the w ll of angry hea en sinc the day that son of thine escaped his doom he that for a bride accursed brought destruction on the T ojan citad l There lie the gory corpses of the slain by the shrine of Pallas for vultures to carry off and Troy is com to slavery s yoke.

Hec. O my country O unhappy land I weep for thee now I ft behind now dost thou beh ld thy piteous end and thee my house I weep wherein I suffered trava l. O my children! eft of her city as your mother is, she now is losing you Oh, what mourning and what sorrow! oh what endless streams f tears in our houses! The dead alone forg t their griefs and nev r shed a tear

Ch. What sweet r l f to sufferers t s to w ep to mourn, lament and chant the dirge that tells of grief!

An. Dost thou see this, mother of that Hector who once laid low in battle many a son of Argos?

Hec. I see that t is hea en s way to exalt what men accounted naught and ruin what they most esteemed

An. Hence with my child as booty am I borne the noble are to la ery brought—a b tter bitter change

Hec. This is necessity s grim law it was but now Cassandra was torn with brutal olence from my arms.

An. Alas, las! it seems a second Aia hath appeared to wrong thy daughte b t there be ot r ills fo thee.

Hec. A beyond all count or measure re my sorrows evil ies w th e il n th strug le to be first.

An. Th d ught r Polyxena is dead l in at Achilles tomb an offering to h s lifeless corpse

Hec. O woe is m ! Thi that riddl Talthybius long nce told m a truth obscurely utt ed

An. I saw her w th m eyes so I l ghted from the chariot and covered her corpse w th mantl nd smot pon m breast

Hec. Ala ! m hild for thy nhallowed sacri fic ! and y t gain, ah me! fo this thy shameful death!

An. Her death wa even as t was, and yet that death of hers was after all a happier fate than this my life

Hec. Death and life are not the same my child the one is annihilation the other keeps a place for hope.

An. Hear O mother of children! gi e ear to what I u ge so well, that I may cheer my drooping sp rit 'Tis all one I say ne er to have been born and t be dead and better far is death than l fe with m sery For th dead feel no sorrow any more and kno no grief but he who has known prosperity and has fallen on evil days feels his spirit straying from the scene of form r j ys. Now that child of th ne s dead as though she ne er had seen the l ght and l ttle he recks of her calamity wherea I who aimed at a fair repute though I won a higher lot than most yet missed my luck in life For all that stamps the wife a woman chaste I st ove to do in Hect r s home. In the first place whether ther is a slur upon a woman or whether tl ere is not the v ry fact of her not staying at home brings in its tra n an evil name therefore I gave up an wish to do so and abode e er within my house nor would I admit the cle er gossip women lo e but conscious of a heart that told an honest tale I was content therewith And er would I keep a silent tongue and modest eye before m lo d and well I knew wl ere I might rule my lord and where twas best to yield to h m th fame whereof hath reached the Ach æan host and proved my ruin fo when I was taken captu e Achilles son wo ld ha e me as his w fe and I must serve in the house of mu derers. And f I set aside my love for Hect r and ope my heart to th new lo d I hall appear a tra tress to the dead while f I hate him I shall incur my master s d spleasu e And yet tl ey say a single night remo es a woman s d slik for he husband nay I do hate the w man who, when she hath lost he former lord transf rs her lo e by marry ng a other Not e en th horse if from his f llow torn ill cheerfully draw th y ke and yet the brutes ha e neithe speech nor sense to h lp them and a e by natu e man s in feriors. O Hector mi e! in thee I found husband amply dow red with w sdom, n ble b rth and f r tune a bra man nd a m ghty whilst thou d dst tak me f om my fath s house a spotless bride thyself the first to make this maiden wife. But now death hath laimed thee and I to H llas am soon to sail a captive doomed to wear the y ke of slav ry Hath not then the dead Polyxena, fo whom thou wailest less e il to bear than I? I have n t so much a h pe the last resou of every human heart nor do I begui myself with dreams of f ture bliss, the very thought wh reof is sweet

Ch. Thou art in the self same plight as I thy lamentations for thyself remind m of my own sad case

Hec. I never yet ha e set foot on a ship s deck, though I ha e seen such things in pictures and know of them from hearsay Now sail rs, if there come a storm of moderate forc are al ea erness t save themsel es b tool one at th tiller stands, another

Paris, ho had bee exposed to die on account f an oracle forete l g the misery h would cause if he grew to man esta but shepherd had found him on the hills and reared him.

to take my place thereon? Lose no further time in watching for a favouring breeze to fill thy sails doomed as thou art to carry from this land one of the three avenging spirits Fare thee well mother mine! dry thy tears O country dear! yet a little while my brothers sleeping in the tomb and my own father true and ye shall welcome me yet shall victory crown my advent mongst the dead when I have overthrown the home of our destroyers the house of the sons of Atreus

Exeunt TALTHYBIUS *and* CASSANDRA

Ch Ye guardians of the grey haired Hecuba see how your mistress is sinking speechless to the ground! Take hold of her! will ye let her fall ye worthless slaves? lift up again from where it lies her silvered head

Hec Leave me lying where I fell my maidens—unwelcome service grows not welcome ever—my sufferings now my troubles past afflictions yet to come all claim this lowly posture Gods of heaven! small help I find in calling such allies yet is there something in the form of invoking heaven whenso we fall on evil days First will I descant upon my former blessings so shall I inspire the greater pity for my present woes Born to royal estate and wedded to a royal lord I was the mother of a race of gallant sons no mere ciphers they but Phrygia s chiefest pride children such as no Trojan or Hellenic or barbarian mother ever had to boast All these have I seen slain by the spear of Hellas, and at their tombs have I shorn off my hair with these my eyes I saw their sire my Priam butchered on his own hearth and my city captured nor did others bring this bitter news to me. The maidens I brought up to see chosen for some marriage high for strangers have I reared them and seen them snatched away Nevermore can I hope to be seen by them nor shall my eyes behold them ever in the days to come And last to crown my misery shall I be brought to Hellas a slave in my old age And there the tasks that least befit the evening of my life will they impose on me, to watch their gates and keep the keys me Hector s mother or bake their bread and on the ground in tead of my royal bed lay down my shrunken limbs with tattered rags about my wasted frame a shameful garb for those who once were prosperous Ah woe is me! and this is what I bear and am to bear for one weak woman s wooing! O my daughter O Cassandra! whom gods have summoned to their frenzied train how cruel the lot that ends thy virgin days! And thou Polyxena! my child of sorrow where oh! where art thou? None of all the many sons and daughters have I born comes to aid a wretched mother Why then raise me up? What hope is left us? Guide me who erst trod so daintily the streets of Troy but now am but a slave to a bed upon the ground nigh some rocky ridge that thence I may cast me down and perish after I have wasted my body with weeping Of all the prosperous crowd count none a happy man before he die

Ch Sing me Muse a tale of Troy a funeral dirge in strains unheard as yet with tears the while for now will I uplift for Troy a piteous chant, telling how I met my doom and fell a wretched captive to the Argives by reason of a four footed beast that moved on wheels in the hour that Achæa s sons left at our gates that horse loud rumbling on its way with its trappings of gold and its freight of warriors and our folk cried out as they stood upon the rocky citadel Up now ye whose toil is o er and drag this sacred image to the shrine of the Zeus born maiden goddess of our Ilium! Forth from his house came every youth and every grey head too and with songs of joy they took the fatal snare within Then hastened all the race of Phrygia to the gates, to make the goddess a present of an Argive band ambushed in the polished mountain pine Dardania s ruin a welcome gift to be to her the virgin queen of deathless steeds and with nooses of cord they dragged it as it had been a ship s dark hull to the stone built fane of the goddess Pallas and set it on that floor so soon to drink our country s blood But as they laboured and made merry came on the pitchy night loud the Libyan flute was sounding and Phrygian songs awoke while maidens beat the ground with airy foot uplifting their gladsome song and in the halls a blaze of torchlight shed its flickering shadows on sleeping eyes In that hour around the house was I singing as I danced to that maiden of the hills the child of Zeus when lo! there rang along the town a cry of death which filled the homes of Troy and little babes in terror clung about their mothers skirts as forth from their ambush came the warrior band the handiwork of maiden Pallas. Anon the altars ran with Phrygian blood and desolation reigned o er every bed where young men lay beheaded a glorious crown for Hellas won ay for her the nurse of youth but for our Phrygian fatherland a bitter grief Look Hecuba! dost see Andromache advancing hither on a foreign car? and with her clasped to her throbbing breast is her dear Astyanax Hector s child

Enter ANDROMACHE

Hec Whither art thou borne unhappy wife mounted on that car side by side with Hector s brazen arms and Phrygian spoils of war with which Achilles son will deck the shrines of Phthia on his return from Troy?

Andromache My Achæan masters drag me hence

Hec Woe is thee!

An Why dost thou in note of woe utter the dirge that is mine?

Hec Ah me!

An For these sorrows

Hec O Zeus!

An And for this calamity

Hec O my children!

An Our day is past

Hec Joy is fled and Troy o erthrown

An Woe is me!

Hec Dead too all my gallant sons!

An Alack and well a-day!

Hec Ah me for my—

that keth nigh the holy hills where first Athena made the grey olive branch to appear, a crown for her glad heads and a glory unto happy Athens, thou didst come in knightly brotherhood with that great archer Alcmena's son to sack our city Ilium in days gone by, on thy advent from Hellas, what time he led the chosen flower of Hellas, vexed for the steeds denied him, and at the fair stream of Simois he stayed his sea-borne ship and fastened cables to the stern, and forth therefrom he took the bow his hand could deftly shoot, to be the doom of Laomedon; and with the ruddy breath of fire he wasted the masonry squared by Phoebus' line and chisel, and sacked the land of Troy; so twice in two attacks hath the bloodstained spear destroyed Dardania's walls.

In vain it seems, thou Phrygian boy,¹ pacing with dainty step mid the golden chalices, dost thou fill high the cup of Zeus, a service passing fair; seeing that the land of thy birth is being consumed by fire. The shore re-echoes to our cries; and, as a bird bewails its young, so we bewail our husbands or our children, or our grey-haired mothers. The dew-fed springs where thou didst bathe, the course where thou didst train, are now no more; but thou beside the throne of Zeus art sitting with a calm, sweet smile upon thy fair young face, while the spear of Hellas lays the land of Priam waste. Ah! Love, Love, who once didst seek these Dardan halls, deep-seated in the hearts of heavenly gods, how high didst thou make Troy to tower in those days, allying her with deities! But I will cease to urge reproaches against Zeus; for white-winged dawn, whose light is man's dear, turned a baleful eye upon our land and watched the ruin of our citadel, though she had within her bridal bower a husband from this land, whom on a day a car of gold and spangled stars caught up and carried thither, great source of hope to his native country; but all the love the gods once had for Troy is passed away.

Enter MENELAUS

Menelaus Hail! thou radiant orb by whose fair light I now shall capture her that was my wife, e'en Helen; for I am that Menelaus, who hath toiled so hard, I and Achaea's host. To Troy I came, not so much as men suppose to take this woman, but to punish him who from my house stole my wife, traitor to my hospitality. But he, by heaven's will, hath paid the penalty, ruined and his country too, by the spear of Hellas. And I am come to bear that Spartan woman hence,—wife I have no mind to call her, though she once was mine; for now she is but one among the other Trojan dames who share these tents as captives. For they—the very men who toiled to take her with the spear—have granted her to me to slay, or if I will, to spare and carry back with me to Argos. Now my purpose is not to put her to death in Troy, but to carry her to Hellas in my sea-borne ship, and then surrender her to death, recompense to all whose friends were slain in Ilium.

Ho! my trusty men, enter the tent and drag her out to me by her hair with many a murder foul; and when a favouring breeze shall blow, to Hellas will we convey her.

Hec O thou that dost support the earth and restest thereupon, whosoe'er thou art, a riddle past our ken! be thou Zeus, or natural necessity, or man's intellect, to thee I pray; for thou, though thou treadest o'er a noiseless path, all thy dealings with mankind are by justice guided.

Me How now? Strange the prayer thou offerest unto heaven!

Hec I thank thee, Menelaus, if thou wilt slay that wife of thine. Yet shun the sight of her, lest she smite thee with regret. For she ensnares the eyes of men, o'erthrows their towns, and burns their houses, so potent are her witcheries! Well I know her; so dost thou and those her victims too.

Enter HELEN

Helen Menelaus! this prelude well may fill me with alarm; for I am haled with violence by thy servants' hands and brought before these tents. Still though I am well-nigh sure thou hatest me, yet would I fain inquire what thou and Hellas have decided about my life.

Me To judge thy case required no great exactness; the host with one consent—that host whom thou didst wrong—handed thee over to me to die.

Hel May I answer this decision, proving that my death, if to die I am, will be unjust?

Me I came not to argue, but to slay thee.

Hec Hear her, Menelaus; let her not die for want of that, and let me answer her again; for thou knowest naught of her villainies in Troy; and the whole case, if thus summed up, will insure her death against all chance of an escape.

Me This boon needs leisure still; if she wishes to speak, the leave is given. Yet will I grant her this because of thy words, that she may hear them, and not for her own sake.

Hel Perhaps thou wilt not answer me, from counting me a foe, whether my words seem good or ill. Yet will I put my charges and thine over against each other, and then reply to the accusations I suppose thou wilt advance against me. First then, she was the author of these troubles by giving birth to Paris; next, old Priam ruined Troy and me, because he did not slay his babe Alexander, baleful semblance of a fire-brand, long ago. Hear what followed. This Paris was to judge the claims of three rival goddesses; so Pallas offered him command of all the Phrygians, and the destruction of Hellas; Hera promised he should spread his dominion o'er Asia and the utmost bounds of Europe, if he would decide for her; but Cypris spoke in rapture of my loveliness, and promised him this boon, if she should have the preference o'er those twain for beauty; now mark the inference I deduce from this; Cypris won the day o'er them, and thus far hath my marriage proved of benefit to Hellas, that ye are not subject to barbarian rule, neither vanquished in the strife, nor yet by tyrants crushed. What Hellas

¹Ganymede.

sets himself to work the sheets a third meantime is baling out the ship but if tempestuous waves arise to overwhelm them they yield to fortune and commit themselves to the driving billows Even so I by reason of my countless troubles am dumb and forbear to say a word for Heaven with its surge of misery is too strong for me Cease Oh cease my darling child to speak of Hector s fate no tears of thine can save him honour thy present lord offering thy sweet nature as the bait to win him If thou do this thou wilt cheer thy friends as well as thyself and thou shalt rear my Hector s child to lend stout aid to Ilium that so thy children in the after time may build her up again and our city yet be stablished But lo! our talk must take a different turn who is this Achæan menial I see coming hither sent to tell us of some new design?

Enter TALTHYBIUS

Ta Oh hate me not thou that erst wert Hector s wife *the bravest of the Phrygians! for my tongue* would fain not tell that which the Danai and sons of Pelops both command

An What is it? Thy prelude bodeth evil news

Ta Tis decreed thy son is—how can I tell my news?

An Surely not to have a different master from me?

Ta None of all Achæa s chiefs shall ever lord it over him

An Is it their will to leave him here a remnant yet of Phrygia s race?

Ta I know no words to break the sorrow lightly to thee

An I thank thee for thy consideration unles indeed thou hast good news to tell

Ta They mean to slay thy son there is my hateful message to thee

An O God! this is worse tidings than my forced marriage

Ta So spake Odysseus to the assembled Hellenes and his word prevails

An Oh once again ah me! there is no measure in the woes I bear

Ta He said they should not rear so brave a father s son

An May such counsels yet prevail about children of his!

Ta From Troy s battlements he must be thrown Let it be even so and thou wilt show more wisdom cling not to him but bear thy sorrows with heroic heart nor in thy weakness deem that thou art strong For nowhere hast thou any help consider this thou must thy husband and thy city are no more so thou art in our power and I alone am match enou h for one weak woman wherefore I would not see thee bent on strife or any course to bring thee shame or hate nor would I hear thee rashly curse the Achæans For if thou say aught whereat the host grow wroth this child will find no burial nor pity either But if thou hold thy peace and with composure take thy fate thou wilt not leave his corpse unburied and thyself wilt find more favour with the Achæans

An My child! my own sweet babe and priceless treasure! thy death the foe demands and thou must leave thy wretched mother That which saves the lives of others proves thy destruction even thy sire s nobility to thee thy father s valiancy has proved no boon O the woful wedding rites that brought me erst to Hector s home hoping to be the mother of a son that should rule o er Asia s fruitful fields instead of serving as a victim to the sons of Danaus! Dost weep my babe? dost know thy hapless fate? Why clutch me with thy hands and to my garment cling nestling like a tender chick beneath my wing? Hector will not rise again and come gripping his famous spear to bring thee salvation no kinsman of thy sire appears nor might of Phrygian hosts one awful headlong leap from the dizzy height and thou wilt dash out thy life with none to pity thee! *Oh to clasp thy tender limbs a mother s fond*est joy! Oh to breathe thy fragrant breath! In vain it seems these breasts did suckle thee wrapped in thy swaddling clothes all for naught I used to toil and wore myself away! Kiss thy mother now for the last time nestle to her that bare thee twine thy arms about my neck and join thy lips to mine! O ye Hellenes cunning to devise new forms of cruelty why slay this child who never wronged any? Thou daughter of Tyndarus thou art no child of Zeus, but sprung I trow of many a sire first of some evil demon next of Envy then of Murder and of Death and every horror that the earth begets That Zeus was never sire of thine I boldly do assert bane as thou hast been to many a Hellene and barbarian too Destruction catch thee! Those fair eyes of thine have brought a shameful ruin on the fields of glorious Troy Take the babe and bear him hence hurl him down if so ye list then feast upon his flesh! Tis heaven s high will we perish and I cannot ward the deadly stroke from my child Hide me and my misery cast me into the ship s hold for tis to a fair wedding I am going now that I have lost my child!

Ch Unhappy Troy! thy thousand thou hast lost for one woman s sake and her accursed wooing

Ta Come child leave fond embracing of thy woful mother and mount the high coronal of thy ancestral towers there to draw thy parting breath as is ordained Take him hence His should the duty be to do such herald s work whose heart knows no pity and who loveth ruthlessness more than my soul doth

Exeunt ANDROMACHE *and* TALTHYBIUS *with* ASTYANAX

Hec O child son of my hapless boy an *unjust* fate robs me and thy mother of thy life How is it with me? What can I do for thee my luckless babe? for thee I smite upon my head and beat my breast my only gift for that alone is in my power Woe for my city! woe for thee! Is not our cup full? What is wanting now to our utter and immediate ruin?

Ch O *Telamon King of Salamis* the feeding ground of bees who hast thy home in a sea girt isle

that fresh Ⅱ h the holy hills where first Athena made the grey olive branch to appear, a crown for heavenly heads and a glory unto happy Athens, thou didst come in knightly brotherhood with that great archer Alcmena's son to sack our city Ilium in days gone by on th ad t from Hellas, what time he led the chosen flower of Hellas, vexed for the steeds denied him, and at the fair stream of Simois he stayed his sea borne ship and fastened cables to the stern, and forth therefrom he took the bow his hand could deftly shoot to be th doom of Laomedon and with th ruddy breath of fire he wasted the masonry squared by Phoebus line and chisel, and sacked the land of Troy; so twice in two attacks hath th bloodstained spear destroyed Dardania's walls.

In vain, it seems, thou Phrygian boy[1], pacing with dainty step amid thy golden chalices, dost thou fill the cup of Zeus, a service passing fair; seeing that the land of thy birth is being consumed by fire. The shore re-echoes to our cries and as a bird bewails its young so we bewail our husbands or our children, or our grey haired mothers. The dew fed springs where thou didst bathe the course where thou didst train, are now no more but thou beside the throne of Zeus art sitting with a calm sweet smile upon thy fair young face while the spear of Hellas lays the land of Priam waste. Ah! Love, Love who once didst seek these Dardan halls, deep-seated in the hearts of heavenly gods, how high didst thou make Troy to tower in those days, allying her with deities! But I will cease to urge reproaches against Zeus for that white winged dawn whose light to man is dear, turned baleful eye upon our land and watched the ruin of our citadel, though she had within her bridal bower a husband from this land whom on a day a car of gold and spangled stars caught up and carried thither great source of hope to his native country but all the love the gods once had for Troy is passed away.

Enter MENELAUS.

Menelaus Hail! thou radiant orb by whose fair light I now shall capture her that was my wife even Helen for I am that Menelaus, who hath toiled so hard, I and Achaea's host. To Troy I came not so much as men suppose to take this woman but to punish him who from my house stole my wife, traitor to my hospitality But he by heaven's will, hath paid the penalty ruined and his country too, by the spear of Hellas. And I am come to bear that Spartan woman hence—wife I have no mind to call her though she once was mine for now she is but one among the Trojan dames who share these tents. For they—the very men who toiled to take her with the spear—have granted her to me to slay or if I will, to spare and carry back with me to Argos. Now my purpose is not to put her to death in Troy but to carry her to Hellas in my sea borne ship and then surrender her to death, recompense to all whose friends were slain in Ilium.

[1] Ganymede

Ho! my trusty men enter the tent and drag her out to me by her hair with many a murder foul and when favouring breeze shall blow to Hellas will we convey her

Hec O thou that dost support the earth and restest thereupon whosoever thou art a riddle past our ken! be thou Zeus, or natural necessity, or man's intellect, to thee I pray for though thou treadest o'er a noiseless path, all thy dealings with mankind are by justice guided

Me How now? Strange the prayer thou offerest unto heaven!

Hec I thank thee Menelaus, if thou wilt slay that wife of thine Yet shun the sight of her lest she smite thee with regret For she ensnares the eyes of men, o'erthrows their towns and burns their houses, so potent are her witcheries! Well I know her; so dost thou and those her victims too.

Enter HELEN

Helen Menelaus! this prelude well may fill me with alarm for I am haled with violence by thy servants hands and brought before these tents. Still though I am well nigh sure thou hatest me yet would I fain inquire what thou and Hellas have decided about my life

Me To judge thy case required no great exactness the host with one consent—that host whom thou didst wrong—handed thee over to me to die

Hel May I answer this decision, proving that my death, if to die I am will be unjust?

Me I came not to argue but to slay thee.

Hec Hear her Menelaus let her not die for want of that and let me answer her again for thou knowest naught of her villainies in Troy and the whole case if thus summed up, will insure her death against all chance of an escape

Me This boon need leisure still if she wishes to speak the leave is given Yet will I grant her this because of thy words, that she may hear them, and not for her own sake

Hel Perhaps thou wilt not answer me from counting me a foe whether my words seem good or ill. Yet will I put my charges and thine over against each other and then reply to the accusations I suppose thou wilt advance against me. First then she was the author of these troubles by giving birth to Paris next old Priam ruined Troy and me because he did not slay his babe Alexander baleful semblance of a fire brand long ago. Hear what followed This Paris was to judge the claims of three rival goddesses so Pallas offered him command of all the Phrygians, and the destruction of Hellas Hera promised he should spread his dominion o'er Asia and the utmost bounds of Europe if he would decide for her but Cypris spoke in rapture of my loveliness, and promised him this boon, if she should have the preference o'er those twain for beauty now mark the inference I deduce from this Cypris won the day o'er them and thus far hath my marriage proved of benefit to Hellas, that ye are not subject to barbarian rule neither vanquished in the strife nor yet by tyrants crushed What Hellas

gained was ruin to me a victim for my beauty sold and now am I reproached for that which should have set a crown upon my head But thou wilt say I am silent on the real matter at issue how it was I started forth and left thy house by stealth With no mean goddess at his side he came my evil genius call him Alexander or Paris as thou wilt and him didst thou thrice guilty wretch leave behind thee in thy house and sail away from Sparta to the land of Crete Enough of this! For all that followed I must question my own heart not thee what frantic thought led me to follow the stranger from thy house traitress to my country and my home? Punish the goddess show thyself more mighty e en than Zeus who though he lords it o er the other gods is yet her slave wherefore I may well be pardoned Still from hence thou mightest draw a specious argument against me when Paris died and Earth concealed his corpse I should have left his house and sought the Argive fleet since my marriage was no longer in the hands of gods That was what I fain had done yea and the warders on the towers and watchmen on the walls can bear me witness for oft they found me seeking to let myself down stealthily by cords from the battlements but there was that new husband Deiphobus that carried me off by force to be his wife against the will of Troy How then my lord could I be justly put to death by thee with any show of right seeing that he wedded me against my will and those my other natural gifts have served a bitter slavery instead of leading on to triumph? If tis thy will indeed to master gods that very wish displays thy folly

Ch O my royal mistress defend thy children s and thy country s cause bringing to naught her persuasive arguments for she pleads well in spite of all her villainy tis monstrous this!

Hec First will I take up the cause of those goddesses and prove how she perverts the truth For I can ne er believe that Hera or the maiden Pallas would have been guilty of such folly as to sell the one her Argos to barbarians or that Pallas e er would make her Athens subject to the Phrygians coming as they did in mere wanton sport to Ida to contest the palm of beauty For why should goddess Hera set her heart so much on such a prize? Was it to win a nobler lord than Zeus? or was Athena bent on finding mongst the gods a husband she who in her dislike of marriage won from her sire the boon of remaining unwed? Seek not to impute folly to the goddesses in the attempt to gloze o er thy own sin never wilt thou persuade the wise Next thou hast said—what well may make men jeer—that Cypris came with my son to the house of Menelaus Could she not have stayed quietly in heaven and brought thee and Amyclæ to boot to Ilium? Nay! my son was passing fair and when thou sawest him thy fancy straight became thy Cypris for every sensual act that men commit they lay upon this goddess and rightly does her name of Aphrodite begin the word for senselessness so when thou didst catch sight of him in gorgeous foreign garb ablaze with gold thy senses utterly forsook thee Yea for in Argos thou hadst moved in simple state but once free of Sparta twas thy fond hope to deluge by thy lavish outlay Phrygia s town that flowed with gold nor was the palace of Menelaus rich enough for thy luxury to riot in Hal my son carried thee off by force so thou sayest what Spartan saw this? what cry for help didst thou ever raise though Castor was still alive a vigorous youth and his brother also not yet amid the stars? Then when thou wert come to Troy and the Argives were on thy track and the mortal combat was begun whenever tidings came to thee of Menelaus prowess him wouldst thou praise to grieve my son because he had so powerful a rival in his love but if so the Trojans prospered Menelaus was nothing to thee Thy eye was fixed on Fortune and by such practice wert thou careful to follow in her steps, careless of virtue s cause And then in spite of all thou dost assert that thou didst try to let thyself down from the towers by stealth with twisted cords, as if loth to stay? Pray then wert thou ever found fastening the noose about thy neck or whetting the knife as a noble wife would have done in regret for her former husband? And yet full oft I advised thee saying Get thee gone daughter and let my sons take other brides I will help thee to steal away and convey thee to the Achæan fleet oh end the strife twixt us and Hellas! But this was bitter in thy ears For thou wert wantoning in Alexander s house fain to have obeisance done thee by barbarians Yes, twas a proud time for thee and now after all this thou hast bedizened thyself and come forth and hast dared to appear under the same sky as thy husband revolting wretch! Better hadst thou come in tattered raiment cowering humbly in terror with hair shorn short if for thy past sins thy feeling were one of shame rather than effrontery O Menelaus hear the conclusion of my argument crown Hellas by slaying her as she deserves and establish this law for all others of her sex e en death to every traitress to her husband

Ch Avenge thee Menelaus on thy wife as is worthy of thy home and ancestors clear thyself from the reproach of effeminacy at the lips of Hellas, and let thy foes see thy spirit

Me Thy thoughts with mine do coincide that she without constraint left my palace and sought a stranger s love and now Cypris is introduced for mere bluster Away to those who shall stone thee and by thy speedy death requite the weary toils of the Achæans that thou mayst learn not to bring shame on me!

Hel Oh by thy knees I implore thee impute not that heaven sent affliction to me nor slay me pardon I entreat!

Hec Be not false to thy allies whose death this woman caused on their behalf and for my children s sake I sue to thee

Me Peace reverend dame to her I pay no heed Lo! I bid my servants take her hence aboard the ship wherein she is to sail

He Oh never let her set foot with n the same ship as thee.

M How now? is sh hea er than of yore?

He Who lo eth nce must lov alway

Me Wh that d pends how those we lo e are minded But thy wish shall be granted she shall not set foot upon the same ship w th me for thy ad ice is surely sound and when sh comes to Argos sh shall die a shameful death as is her due and im press the need of chastity on all her sex n easy task yet shall her fate strike their foolish hearts with terror e en though they be more lost to shame than she.

Exit MEN LAU *d agging* HELEN *with him*

Ch So then th u ha t del ve ed into Achæa s hand O Zeus, thy shrin in Ilium and thy fra rant altar th offerin s of burnt sacrifice with smoke of myrrh to hea en uprisin nd hol P rgamos and glens of Ida tangled with s growth wh r rills of melting snow pour down their flood a h ly sun lit land that bounds the wo ld a d t kes the god s first r y! Gone are thy sacrifi es! gone the dancer s cheerful shout! gone th gils of the gods a night closed in! Thy mages of carve gold e now no more and Phrygia s holy festi als, tw l e times a year t ea h full moon, a e ended now 'Tis this that filleth me with an ious thought wheth r thou O king seated on the k thy hea enly th o e, carest t all that m city is dest o ed prey t th f rious fiery blast Ah! my hu band fondly lo ed thou art a wanderi spect e u washed nburied lies th corpse wh ' o er th sea th sh p sped by w gs will carry me to A gos, land of steeds, where stand Cyclopia wall of ston upre ed to heaven There in the gate the child en gather hanging round their mothers ecks, and weep thei p teous lamenta tion, O moth r woe is me! t r f om thy sight Achæans bear me awa from thee to th ir d rk ship t row n o e the deep to sacred Salamis r to the hill on the I thmus, that o erlook tw seas, the key t th gates f P lops. Oh may the blazi g thu der bolt h led in might from t hol hom smite the barq of Men lau ful m dsh ps a it is crossin th Ægea ma n s h ca rying m awa in bitt r sorrow f om th sh es of Il um to be a sla e n H llas, h the dau ht r of Zeus still keeps h r golden mirrors, d light of maidens hearts. Nev r ma h each his hom in La onia or his fath r's hearth and hom o com to the town f Pitane[1] or th templ f the goddess[2] th th gates f bronz ha ing taken his capt e h whose mar riage brou ght disgra e on H lla th ough t le gth nd b ead h and w ful wu h on the stream of S mo Ah me ah me! new troubles on m cou try fal t k h pla of those that ll re fresh! B hold haples w es (T th corpse of A t nax wh m the Dana ha ru ll sla by h l h m f om th battlements

[1] A rocotl h

[2] I n of Sp ta wa so called.

[3] A bena of he Bra House, temple on h Acropolis.

Enter TALTHYBIUS *and attendants bearing the corpse of* ASTYANAX *on* HECTOR S *sh eld*

Ta Hecuba one ship alone delays its plash ng oars, and t is soon to sail to the shores of Phthia frei_hted with the remnant of the spoils of Acl illes son for Neoptolemus is already out at sea ha ing hea d that new calamities have befallen Peleus, for Acastus, son of Pelias hath ba ished him the realm Wherefore he is gone too quick to i dulg n any delay and with him goes Andromache who drew many a tear from me what time she started hence wa l ng her country and ayin her farewell to Hec tor s tomb And she c a ed h r master lea e to bury th s poor dead child of Hector who breat ed his la t when from the turrets hurled entreatin too that he would not carry th s shield the terror of the Achæans—th s sl eld with plates of brass wh rewith his father would gird himself—to the home of Peleus o to the same b id l bower wh ther she herself the mother of this corpse w uld be led a bitter si ht to her b t let her bury the ch ld th rein in tead of n a coffin of cedar or a tomb c f stone and to thy hands comm t th corpse that thou mayst deck it with robes and garlands as best thou canst w th thy p esent means for sh s far away and he master s haste prevented her from bury ng the child herself So we when th u th c rpse hast decked will heap the earth abo e and set th reon a spear but do thou with thy best speed perform thy allotted ta k one toil howe r ha I already spared thee for I crossed Scamander tream and b thed the corpse and cleansed its wounds. But now w ll I go to d a gra e for him that our united fforts sho ten ng our task may speed our ship towar ls home

Ex t TLTHY IUS

Hec Plac the h eld upon the gr und Hector s hield so deftl ro nded a p teous s ht a bitter grief fo me to see O e Achæans, mo e reason ha e ye to boa t of your prowes than your wisdom! Why ha e ye in t rror of this child been guilty of a murder ne e matched befor ? D d ye fear that some day he wo ld ear again the f llen walls of Tro ? It seems then ye were n thing after all when though Hecto s f rtunes in the war were prosper us and h had te thousand ther a ms to b k h m we still w re d d ye matched and yet now that our city is taken a d e ery Phrygian lain ye fea a tend r babe l ke th s! Out pon h s fear! say I who fears, b t ne er yet hath reasoned out the cause Ah! m bel ved than is p teous death indeed! Had t thou d ed *for* thy c ty when thou hadst tasted of th sweet of manhood of marria e and of god like power o e oth rs, th n wert th u blest if a ht h rein is blest B t now aft r one glimpse one d eam thereof thou knowest them no more my child and ha e no joy f them though hei to all. Ah poor babe! how sadly ha e thy own father s wall those t w rs that Loxi eared sh rn from thy head the lock thy moth r fondled and so oft caressed from which th ou h fractu ed bones the face of murde grins—briefl to d m my shocking theme O h nds how weet the l enes y retain of his fathe

and yet ye lie limp in your sockets before me! Dear mouth so often full of words of pride death hath closed thee and thou hast not kept the promise thou didst make when nestling in my robe Ah mother mine many a lock of my hair will I cut off for thee and to thy tomb will lead my troops of friends taking a fond farewell of thee But now tis not thy hand that buries me but I on whom is come old age with loss of home and children am burying thee a tender child untimely slain Ah me! those kisses numberless the nurture that I gave to thee those sleepless nights—they all are lost! What shall the bard inscribe upon thy tomb about thee? Argives once for fear of him slew this child! Foul shame should that inscription be to Hellas O child though thou hast no part in all thy father s wealth yet shalt thou have his brazen shield wherein to find a tomb Ah! shield that didst keep safe the comely arm of Hector now hast thou lost thy valiant keeper! How fair upon thy handle lies his imprint and on the rim that circles round the targe are marks of sweat that trickled oft from Hector s brow as he pressed it gainst his beard in battle s stress Come bring forth from such store as we have adornment for the hapless dead for fortune gives no chance now for offerings fair yet of such as I possess shalt thou receive these gifts Foolish mortal he! who thinks his luck secure and so rejoices for fortune like a madman in her moods springs towards this man then towards that and none ever experiences the same unchanging luck

Ch Lo! all is ready and they are bringing at thy bidding from the spoils of Troy garniture to put upon the dead

Hec Ah! my child tis not as victor o er thy comrades with horse or bow—customs Troy esteems without pursuing them to excess—that Hector s mother decks thee now with ornaments from the store that once was thine though now hath Helen whom the gods abhor reft thee of thine own yea and robbed thee of thy life and caused thy house to perish root and branch

Ch Woe! thrice woe! my heart is touched and thou the cause my mighty prince in days now passed!

Hec About thy body now I swathe this Phrygian robe of honour which should have clad thee on thy marriage day wedded to the noblest of Asia s daughters Thou too dear shield of Hector victorious parent of countless triumphs past accept thy crown for though thou share the dead child s tomb death cannot touch thee for thou dost merit honours far beyond those arms[1] that the crafty knave Odysseus won

Ch Alas! ah me! thee O child shall earth take to her breast a cause for bitter weeping Mourn thou mother!

Hec Ah me!

Ch Wail for the dead

Hec Woe is me!

Ch Alas! for thy unending sorrow!

[1]The arms of Achilles

Hec Thy wounds in part will I bind up with bandages a wretched leech in name alone without reality but for the rest thy sire must look to that amongst the dead

Ch Smite oh smite upon thy head with frequent blow of hand Woe is me!

Hec My kind good friends!

Ch Speak out Hecuba the word that was on thy lips

Hec It seems the only things that heaven concerns itself about are my troubles and Troy hateful in their eyes above all other cities In vain did we sacrifice to them Had not the god caught us in his grip and plunged us headlong neath the earth we should have been unheard of nor ever sung in Muses songs furnishing to bards of after-days a subject for their minstrelsy Go bury now in his poor tomb the dead wreathed all duly as befits a corpse And yet I deem it makes but little difference to the dead although they get a gorgeous funeral for this is but a cause of idle pride to the living

The corpse is carried off to burial

Ch Alas! for thy unhappy mother who o er thy corpse hath closed the high hopes of her life! Born of a noble stock counted most happy in thy lot ah! what a tragic death is thine! Ha! who are those I see on yonder pinnacles darting to and fro with flaming torches in their hands? Some new calamity will soon on Troy alight

Enter TALTHYBIUS *above Soldiers are seen on the battlements of Troy torch in hand*

Ta Ye captains whose allotted task it is to fire this town of Priam to you I speak No longer keep the firebrand idle in your hands but launch the flame that when we have destroyed the city of Ilium we may set forth in gladness on our homeward voyage from Troy And you ye sons of Troy —to let my orders take at once a double form— start for the Achæan ships for your departure hence soon as ever the leaders of the host blow loud and clear upon the trumpet And thou unhappy grey haired dame follow for yonder come servants from Odysseus to fetch thee for to him thou art assigned by lot to be a slave far from thy country

Hec Ah woe is me! This surely is the last the utmost limit this of all my sorrows forth from my land I go my city is ablaze with flame Yet thou aged foot make one painful struggle to hasten that I may say a farewell to this wretched town O Troy that erst hadst such a grand career amongst barbarian towns soon wilt thou be reft of that splendid name Lo! they are burning thee and leading us e en now from our land to slavery Great gods! Yet why call on the gods? They did not hearken e en aforetime to our call Come let us rush into the flames for to die with my country in its blazing ruin were a noble death for me

Ta Thy sorrows drive thee frantic poor lady Go lead her hence make no delay for ye must deliver her into the hand of Odysseus conveying to him his prize

Hec O son of Cronos prince of Phrygia father

of our race, dost thou behold our sufferings now unworthy of the stock of Dardanus?

Ch. H sees them, but our mighty city is a city no more, and Tr s day is done.

Hec. Woe! thrice woe upon me! Ilium is ablaze the homes of Pergamos a d its tow rir g walls are now one sheet of flame.

Ch. As the smok soars on wings to hea en so sinks our city to the ground bef e the spear With furious haste both fire and foeman s spear devour each house.

Hec. Hearken my child en hear your mother s voice.

Ch. Thou art call ng on the dead with voice of lamentation.

Hec. Yea, as I stret h my aged limbs upon the ground, nd beat upon the earth w th both my hands.

Ch. I follow thee and kneel in oking from the nether orld my hapless husband

Hec. I am bein drag ed and hurried away—

Ch. O th sorrow of that cry!

Hec. F om my own dea country to dwell be neath master s roof. Woe is me! O Priam Priam slain, unburied l fe w thout a friend nau ht dost thou know of my cruel fate.

Ch. No, for o er his eyes black death hath drawn his pall—a holy man by sinners slain!

Hec. Woe f r the temples of the gods! Woe for our dear city!

Ch. Woe!

Hec. Murderous flame and foeman s spear are now your lot.

Ch. Soon will ye tumble to our own loved soil and be forgotten

Hec. And the dust mountin to hea en on wings like smoke w ll rob me of the sight of my home.

Ch. The name of m country w ll pass into obscurity ll is scattered far and wide, and hapless Troy has ceased to be

Hec. Did y hear that and know its purport?

Ch. Aye twas the cra h of the citadel

Hec. The shock will whelm our city utterly O woe is m ! t embling quaking limbs support my footst ps! away! to face the day that begins thy sla ery

Ch. Woe for our unhappy town! And yet to the A haean fleet ad ance

Hec. Woe f r thee O land that nursed my little babes!

Ch. Ah! woe! *Exeunt* OMNES

ION

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Hermes	Xuthus
Ion	Old Man Servant
Chorus of Creusa s Handmaidens	Servant *of Creusa*
Creusa	Pythian Priestess
	Athena

Before Apollo s temple at Delphi Enter HERMES

Hermes Atlas who bears upon his brazen back the pressure of the sky ancient dwelling of the gods begat Maia from a daughter of one of those gods and she bare me Hermes to mighty Zeus to be the servant of the powers divine Lo! I am come to this land of Delphi where sits Phœbus on the centre of the world and giveth oracles to men ever chanting lays prophetic of things that are to be Now there is a city in Hellas of no small note called after Pallas goddess of the golden lance there did Phœbus force his love on Creusa daughter of Erechtheus beneath the rock of Pallas northward of Athens steep realm called Macræ by the kings of Attica And she without her father s knowledge—for such was the god s good pleasure—bore the burden in her womb unto the end and when her time came she brought forth a child in the house and carried him away to the selfsame cave wherein the god declared his love to her and she cradled him in the hollow of a rounded ark and cast him forth to die observant of the custom of her ancestors and of earth born Erichthonius whom the daughter of Zeus gave into the charge of the daughters[1] of Agraulus after setting on either side to keep him safe a guard of serpents twain Hence in that land among the Erechthidæ tis a custom to protect their babes with charms of golden snakes But ere she left the babe to die the young mother tied about him her own broidered robe And this is the request that Phœbus craves of me for he is my brother Go brother to those children of the soil that dwell in glorious Athens for well thou knowest Athena s city and take a new born babe from out the hollow rock his cradle and his swaddling clothes as well and bear him to my prophetic shrine at Delphi and set him at the entering in of my temple What else remains shall be my care for that child is mine that thou mayst know it So I to do my brother Loxias a service took up the woven ark and bore it off and at the threshold of the shrine I have laid the babe after opening the lid of the wicker cradle that the child might be seen But just as the sun god was starting forth to run his course a priestess chanced to enter the god s shrine and when her eyes lit upon the tender babe she thought it strange that any Delphian maid should dare to cast her child of shame down at the temple of the god wherefore her purpose was to remove him beyond the altar but from pity she renounced her cruel thought and the god to help his child did second her pity to save the babe from being cast out So she took and brought him up but she knew not that Phœbus was his sire nor of the mother that bare him nor yet did the child know his parents While yet he was a child around the altar that fed him he would ramble at his play but when he came to man s estate the Delphians made him treasurer of the god and steward of all his store and found him true and so until the present day he leads a holy life in the god s temple Meantime Creusa mother of this youth is wedded to Xuthus and thus it came to pass a war broke out twixt Athens and the folk of Chalcodon[2] who dwell in the land of Eubœa and Xuthus took part therein and helped to end it for which he received the hand of Creusa as his guerdon albeit he was no native but an Achæan sprung from Æolus the son of Zeus and after many years of wedded life he and Creusa still are childless wherefore they are come to this oracle of Apollo in their desire for offspring To this end is Loxias guiding their destiny nor hath it escaped his ken as some suppose For when Xuthus enters this shrine the god will give him his own son and declare that Xuthus is the sire that so the boy may come to his mother s home and be acknowledged by Creusa while the marriage of Loxias remains a secret and the child obtains his rights and he shall cause him to be called Ion founder of a realm in Asia through all the breadth of Hellas But now will I get me to yon grotto neath the laurel s shade that I may learn what is decreed about the child For I see the son of Loxias now coming forth to cleanse the gateway in front of the temple with boughs of laurel I greet him first of all the gods by his name Ion which he soon shall bear *Exit*

Enter ION

Ion Lo! the sun god is even now turning towards the earth his chariot car resplendent before yon fire

[1]The daughters of Cecrops a mythical king of Attica

[2]The Eubœans are so called from Chalcodon a king of Eubœa

the stars retire to night's mysterious gloom from forth the firmament; the peaks of Parnassus, where no man may set foot, are all ablaze and hail the car of day for mortal's service. To Phoebus' roof mounts the smoke of myrrh, offering of the desert; there on the holy tripod sits the Delphian priestess, chanting to the ears of Hellas in numbers loud whate'er Apollo doth proclaim. Ye Delphians, votaries of Phoebus, away! to Castalia's gushing fount as silver clear; and when ye have bathed you in its waters pure, enter the shrine and keep your lips in holy silence that it may be well; careful to utter words of good omen amongst yourselves to those who wish to consult the oracle; while I with laurel sprays and sacred wreaths and drops of water sprinkled o'er the floor will purify the entrance to the shrine of Phoebus, my task each day from childhood's hour; and with my bow will I put to flight the flocks of feathered fowls that harm his sacred offerings; for here in Phoebus' shrine which nurtured me I minister an orphan, fatherless and motherless.

Come, thou tender laurel shoot, gathered from gardens divine to wait upon the glorious god, thou that sweepest clean the altar of Phoebus hard by his shrine, where holy founts, that ever gush with ceaseless flow, bedew the myrtle's hallowed spray wherewith I cleanse the temple floor the livelong day, so soon as the swift sun-god wings his flight on high, in my daily ministration. Hail Pæan, prince of healing! blest, ah! doubly blest be thou, child of Latona!

Fair the service that I render thee, Phoebus, before thy house, honouring thy seat of prophecy; a glorious task I count it to serve not mortal man but deathless god; wherefore I never weary of performing holy services. Phoebus is to me as the father that begot me; for as such I praise the god that gives me food; 'tis Phoebus, who dwelleth in the temple, whom I call by that helpful name of father. Hail Pæan, healer-god, good luck to thee and blessing, child of Latona! My task is nearly done of sweeping with the laurel broom, so now from golden ewer will I sprinkle o'er the ground water from Castalia's gushing spring, scattering the liquid dew with hands from all defilement free. Oh may I never cease thus to serve Phoebus, or if I do, may fortune smile upon me!

Ha! there come the feathered tribes, leaving their nests on Parnassus. I forbid you to settle on the coping or enter the gilded dome. Thou herald of Zeus, that masterest the might of other birds with those talons of thine, once more shall my arrow overtake thee.

Lo! another comes sailing towards the altar, a swan; take thy bright plumes elsewhere; for thou that Phoebus' lyre that sounds shall ever save thee from my bow. Speed away and settle at Delos' mere; for if thou wilt not hearken, thy blood will choke the utterance of thy fair melody.

Ha! what new bird comes now? Does it mean to build a nest of dry straw for its brood beneath the gables? Yon whizzing arrow bow drive thee away. Dost not hear me? Away, and rear thy young amid

the streams of swirling Alpheus, or get thee to the woody Isthmian glen, that Phoebus' offerings and his shrine may take no hurt. I am loth to slay ye, ye messengers to mortal man of messages from heaven; still must I serve Phoebus, to whose tasks I am devoted, nor will I cease to minister to those that give me food.

Enter CHORUS OF CREUSA'S HANDMAIDENS

Chorus I. It is not in holy Athens only that there are courts of the gods with fine colonnades, and the worship of Apollo, guardian of highways; but here too, at the shrine of Loxias, son of Latona, shines the lovely eye of his twin fair faces.

Ch. II. Just look at this: here is the son of Zeus killing with his scimitar of gold the watersnake of Lerna. Do look at him, my friend!

Ch. I. Yes, I see. And close to him stands another with a blazing torch uplifted; who is he? Can this be the warrior Iolaus whose story is told on my broidery, who shares with the son of Zeus his labours and helps him in the moil?

Ch. III. Oh! but look at this! a man mounted on a winged horse killing a fire-breathing monster with three bodies.

Ch. I. I am turning my eyes in every direction. Behold the rout of the giants carved on these walls of stone.

Ch. IV. Yes, yes, good friends, I am looking.

Ch. V. Dost see her standing over Enceladus, brandishing her shield with the Gorgon's head?

Ch. VI. I see Pallas, my own goddess.

Ch. VII. Again, dost see the mighty thunderbolt all aflame in the far-darting hands of Zeus?

Ch. VIII. I do; 'tis blasting with its flame Mimas, that deadly foe.

Ch. IX. Bromius too, the god of revelry, is slaying another of the sons of Earth with his thyrsus of ivy, never meant for battle.

Ch. I. Thou that art stationed by this fane, to thee I do address me; may we pass the threshold of these vaults with our fair white feet?

Ion Nay, ye must not, strange ladies.

Ch. X. May I ask thee about something I have heard?

Ion What wouldst *thou* ask?

Ch. XI. Is it really true that the temple of Phoebus stands upon the centre of the world?

Ion Aye, there it stands with garlands decked and gorgons all around.

Ch. XII. Even so the legend saith.

Ion If ye have offered sacrificial cake before the shrine and have aught ye wish to ask Phoebus, approach the altar; but enter not the inmost sanctuary save ye have sacrificed sheep.

Ch. XIII. I understand; but we have no mind to transgress against the god's law; the pictures here without will amuse us.

Ion Feast your eyes on all ye may.

Ch. XIV. My mistress gave me leave to see these vaulted chambers.

Ion Whose handmaids do ye vow yourselves?

Ch. XV. The temple, where Pallas dwells, is the

ION

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERMES	XUTHUS
ION	OLD MAN SERVANT
CHORUS OF CREUSA S HANDMAIDENS	SERVANT *of Creusa*
CREUSA	PYTHIAN PRIESTESS
	ATHENA

Before Apollo s temple at Delphi Enter HERMES

Hermes Atlas who bears upon his brazen back the pressure of the sky ancient dwelling of the gods begat Maia from a daughter of one of those gods and she bare me Hermes to mighty Zeus to be the servant of the powers divine Lo! I am come to this land of Delphi where sits Phœbus on the centre of the world and giveth oracles to men ever chanting lays prophetic of things that are to be Now there is a city in Hellas of no small note called after Pallas goddess of the golden lance there did Phœbus force his love on Creusa daughter of Erechtheus beneath the rock of Pallas northward of Athens steep realm called Macræ by the kings of Attica And she without her father s knowledge—for such was the god s good pleasure—bore the burden in her womb unto the end and when her time came she brought forth a child in the house and carried him away to the selfsame cave wherein the god declared his love to her and she cradled him in the hollow of a rounded ark and cast him forth to die observant of the custom of her ancestors and of earth born Erichthonius whom the daughter of Zeus gave into the charge of the daughters[1] of Aglaulus after setting on either side to keep him safe a guard of serpents twain Hence in that land among the Erechthidæ tis a custom to protect their babes with charms of golden snakes But ere she left the babe to die the young mother tied about him her own broidered robe And this is the request that Phœbus craves of me for he is my brother Go brother to those children of the soil that dwell in glorious Athens for well thou knowest Athena s city and take a new born babe from out the hollow rock his cradle and his swaddling clothes as well and bear him to my prophetic shrine at Delphi and set him at the entering in of my temple What else remains shall be my care for that child is mine that thou mayst know it So I to do my brother Loxias a service took up the woven ark and bore it off and at the threshold of the shrine I have laid the babe after opening the lid of the wicker cradle that the child might be seen But just as the sun god was starting forth to run his course a priestess chanced to enter the god s shrine and when her eyes lit upon the tender babe she thought it strange that any Delphian maid should dare to cast her child of shame down at the temple of the god wherefore her purpose was to remove him beyond the altar but from pity she renounced her cruel thought and the god to help his child did second her pity to save the babe from being cast out So she took and brought him up but she knew not that Phœbus was his sire nor of the mother that bare him nor yet did the child know his parents While yet he was a child around the altar that fed him he would ramble at his play but when he came to man s estate the Delphians made him treasurer of the god and steward of all his store and found him true and so until the present day he leads a holy life in the god s temple Meantime Creusa mother of this youth is wedded to Xuthus and thus it came to pass a war broke out twixt Athens and the folk of Chalcodon[2] who dwell in the land of Eubœa and Xuthus took part therein and helped to end it for which he received the hand of Creusa as his guerdon albeit he was no native but an Achæan sprung from Æolus the son of Zeus and after many years of wedded life he and Creusa still are childless wherefore they are come to this oracle of Apollo in their desire for offspring To this end is Loxias guiding their destiny nor hath it escaped his ken as some suppose For when Xuthus enters this shrine the god will give him his own son and declare that Xuthus is the sire that so the boy may come to his mother s home and be acknowledged by Creusa while the marriage of Loxias remains a secret and the child obtains his rights and he shall cause him to be called Ion founder of a realm in Asia through all the breadth of Hellas But now will I get me to yon grotto neath the laurel s shade that I may learn what is decreed about the child For I see the son of Loxias now coming forth to cleanse the gateway in front of the temple with boughs of laurel I greet him first of all the gods by his name Ion which he soon shall bear *Exit*

Enter ION

Ion Lo! the sun god is even now turning towards the earth his chariot car resplendent before yon fire

[1]The daughters of Cecrops a mythic king of Attica

[2]The Eubœans are so called from Chalcodon a king of Eubœa

t. stars retire to m ht s m sterious gloom from forth th firmament th peaks f *Parnassus*, where no man ma set foot are ll ablaze and hail the car of day for mortal sen ce T Phœbus oof mounts u the smoke of myrrh offerin of the desert there on the hol tripod sits th Delphian priestess, chant ing t th ears f Hellas in numbers l ud whate er Apo o doth proclaim. Y Delphians, votaries of Phœbus, wa l to Ca talia s gushi fount as sil er clea and hen v ha e bathed you in it waters pure enter the shrine nd keep our lips n hol silence tat t ma be w ll ca f l to utt r wo ds of good omen amongst yoursel es to those who w h t consult th oracle while I w th laur l sprays and sacred wreaths and drops of wat r pri kled o r the floor will purify th entrance t the shrin of Phœbus, m task ea h day from childhood hour and w h m bow ul I put to fli ht the flocks of feathered fowls that harm his sacred fferings f r h re in Phœbus shri... which urt ed me I min ster an orphan, fatherless and motherless.

Come thou tender laurel shoot gath red f om gardens d ine to wa t pon th gl ri us god thou that sweepest clean th altar f Phœb s hard b his sh e he holy founts, that e er gu.h w th ease less flow bedew the m rtl s hallowed spray whe with I clea se the temple floor th li elo day so soon as the swift sun god wings his flight on hi h in m daily ministration Hail Pæan pri e of heal ing! b est, ah! doubly blest be thou, child of Latona! Fair the service that I rende to thee Phœbus, be fore thy house, h ourin thy seat of p phecy a glorious ta k I cou t t to serv not m rtal man b t deathless gods wherefo e I never weary f pe f rm in holy services. Phœbus is t m s th fathe that begot me, for as such I pra se the god that g es me food 'Tis Phœbus, who dwell th in the temple hom I call by that h lpf l name of fathe Hail Pæan, healin god good l ck t thee and blessing child f Latona! M ta k s nearly d f sweeping t h the la rel broom so w from a g ld n ewer ul I s rin. kle er th *ground water from Ca talia s gushing spring*, scatt ring th liquid dew w th hand from all defilement free Oh ma I cea e thus to serv Phœbus, or if I do, may fo t mil upon me!

Ha! they come, the feathered tr bes, lea in the nests on Parnassus. I forbid e to settle on th coping or enter th gilded dom Thou herald f Zeus, that masterest the m ght f other birds w th those talon of thine, once mor shall m a ow o ertake thee.

Lo! nother comes sa li g towa d th ltar a swan this time tak thy bright plumes lsewh r hence! that Phœbu tun th t th son hall er n e thee from th bow so fl a nd settle t the Delia mere for f thou w lt not hea ken, thy b ood s all hok the utteranc f th fa m lod

Ha hat ew bird comes now Does t mea to b ... est of dry traw for t brood be eath the gables Soon shall my twa g g bow dri thee wa Dost not hea m ? Away and ear thy youn amid the streams of swi lin Alpheus or get thee to the woody Isthmian glen that Phœbus offerings and his shrine may take n hurt I am loth to slay ye ye messengers to mortal man of messages from heaven still must I serve Phœbus, to whose ta ks I am de oted nor will I cease to minister to those that gi e me food

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Ch I I am turn ng my yes n every d rection Behold the rout f the giants carved on these walls of tone

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Ch VII Aga n dost see the massy thunderbolt all *aflame in the far-da tin hands f Zeu* ?

Ch VIII I do t s blast n w th its flame Mimas, that deadl foe

Ch IX. B omius too, the god of ev lry is sla ing anoth r f the sons of Earth w th his thyrsus of i y eve meant f battle

Ch I Thou that art statio ed by thi fane t thee I d add ess me may we pass the threshold of these aults, w th our fair white feet?

Io N y e must n t stran er ladies.

Ch X May I k thee bo t somethin I ha e hea d?

Io What wouldst thou k?

Ch XI Is it eall true that th temple of Phœbus sta d pon th cent f the world?

Ion Aye there t stands w th ga lands decked and go eous ll arou d

Ch XII E en so th legend sa th.

I If ha offered a sacrificial cak before the hri e and ha u ht wish to ask Phœbus, ap p oa h the ltar but *enter n t the inmost sanctu* ary sa e e ha e sac ificed heep

Ch XIII I understand but we have no *mind to* trespa gain t the god's law the pictures here with out will am se us.

I n Feast you eyes on all ye may

Ch XIV M mi tress ga me leave to see these vaulted chamber

I Whose handmaids do y ow yoursel es?

Ch XV The templ where Pallas dw lls, s the

nursing home of my lords But lo! here is she of whom thou askest

Ion Lady whosoe er thou art I see thou art of noble birth and thy bearing proves thy gentle breeding For from his bearing one may mostly judge whether a man is nobly born Yet am I much amazed to see thee close thine eyes in grief and with tears bedew thy noble face when thou standest face to face with the holy oracle of Loxias Why lady art thou thus disquieted? Here where all others show their joy at sight of Phœbus sanctuary thine eye is wet with tears

Enter CREUSA

Creusa Most courteously sir stranger dost thou express surprise at these my tears the sight of this temple of Apollo recalled to me a memory of long ago and somehow my thoughts went wandering home though I am here myself Ah hapless race of women! ah ye reckless gods! What shall I say? to what standard shall we refer justice if through the injustice of our lords and masters we are brought to ruin?

Ion Why lady art thou thus cast down past all finding out?

Cr Tis naught I have shot my bolt for what remains I say no more nor seek thou further to inquire

Ion Who art thou and whence? who is the father that begat thee? by what name are we to call thee?

Cr Creusa is my name the daughter of Erechtheus I my native land is Athens

Ion A glorious city thine lady a noble line of ancestry! with what reverence I behold thee!

Cr Thus far no further goes my luck good sir

Ion Pray is the current legend true—

Cr What is thy question? I fain would learn

Ion Was thy father s grandsire really sprung from Earth?

Cr Yes Erichthonius was but my high birth avails me not

Ion Is it true Athena reared him from the ground?

Cr Aye and into maidens hands though not his mother s—

Ion Consigned him did she? as tis wont to be set forth in painting

Cr Yes to the daughters of Cecrops to keep him safe unseen

Ion I have heard the maidens opened the ark wherein the goddess laid him

Cr And so they died dabbling with their blood the rocky cliff

Ion Even so But what of this next story? Is it true or groundless?

Cr What is thy question? Ask on I have no calls upon my leisure

Ion Did thy sire Erechtheus offer thy sisters as a sacrifice?

Cr For his country s sake he did endure to slay the maids as victims

Ion And how didst thou alone of all thy sisters escape?

Cr I was still a tender babe in my mother s arms

Ion Did the earth really open its mouth and swallow thy father?

Cr The sea god smote and slew him with his trident

Ion Is there a spot there called Macræ?

Cr Why ask that? what memories thou recallest!

Ion Doth the Pythian god with his flashing fire do honour to the place?

Cr Honour yes! Honour indeed! would I had never seen the spot!

Ion How now? dost thou abhor that which the god holds dear?

Cr No no but I and that cave are witnesses of a deed of shame

Ion Lady who is the Athenian lord that calls thee wife?

Cr No citizen of Athens but a stranger from another land

Ion Who is he? he must have been one of noble birth

Cr Xuthus son of Æolus sprung from Zeus

Ion And how did he a stranger win thee a native born?

Cr Hard by Athens lies a neighbouring township Eubœa

Ion With a bounding line of waters in between so I have heard

Cr This did he sack making common cause with Cecrops sons

Ion Coming as an ally maybe he won thy hand for this?

Cr Yes this was his dower of battle the prize of his prowess

Ion Art thou come to the oracle alone or with thy lord?

Cr With him But he is now visiting the cavern of Trophonius

Ion As a spectator merely or to consult the oracle?

Cr Tis his wish to hear the self same answer from Trophonius and Phœbus too

Ion Is it to seek earth s produce or fruit of offspring that ye come?

Cr We are childless though wedded these many years

Ion Hast thou never been a mother? art thou wholly childless?

Cr Phœbus knows whether I am childless

Ion Unhappy wife! how this doth mar thy fortune else so happy!

Cr But who art thou? how blest I count thy mother!

Ion Lady I am called the servant of Apollo and so I am

Cr An offering of thy city or sold to him by some master?

Ion Naught know I but this that I am called the slave of Loxias

Cr Then do I in my turn pity thee sir stranger

Ion Because I know not her that bare me or him that begat me

Cr Is thy home here in the temple, or hast thou a house to dwell in?

Ion. The god's whole temple is my house, where-e'er sleep overtakes me.

Cr. Was it as a child or young man that thou camest to the temple?

Ion. Those who seem to know the truth, say I was but a babe.

Cr. What Delphian maid then weaned thee?

Ion. I never knew a mother's breast. But she who brought me up—

Cr. Who was she, unhappy youth? I see thy sufferings in my own.

Ion. The priestess of Phoebus; I look on her as my mother.

Cr. Until thou camest unto man's estate, what nurture hadst thou?

Ion. The altar fed me, and the bounty of each casual guest.

Cr. Woe is thy mother then, whoe'er she was!

Ion. Maybe my birth was some poor woman's wrong.

Cr. Hast thou any store? for thy dress is costly enough.

Ion. The god I serve gives me these robes I wear.

Cr. Went thou never eager to inquire into thy birth?

Ion. Ah! yes, lady! but I have no clue at all to guide me.

Cr. Ah! I know another woman who hath suffered as thy mother did.

Ion. Who is she? If she would but help me in the task, how happy should I be!

Cr. 'Tis she on whose account I have preceded my husband hither.

Ion. What are thy wishes? be sure I will serve thee, lady!

Cr. I would fain obtain a secret answer from Apollo's oracle.

Ion. Name it, then; the rest will I undertake for thee.

Cr. Hear then this story. Yet I am ashamed.

Ion. Thus wilt thou accomplish naught; for shame is a goddess slow to act.

Cr. A friend of mine asserts that Phoebus lay with her.

Ion. Phoebus with a mortal woman? Stranger, lady, say not so.

Cr. Yea, and she bare the god a child without her father's knowledge.

Ion. It cannot be; some man did wrong her and she is ashamed of it.

Cr. This she denies herself; and she hath suffered further woe.

Ion. How so, if she was wedded to a god?

Cr. The babe she bare, she did expose.

Ion. Where is the child who was thus cast forth? beholds he yet the light?

Cr. No man knoweth. That is the very thing I would ask the oracle.

Ion. But if he be no more, how did he perish?

Cr. She supposes that beasts devoured the hapless babe.

Ion. What proof led her to form this opinion?

Cr. She came to the place where she exposed him, but found him no longer there.

Ion. Were any drops of blood upon the path?

Cr. None, she says; and yet she ranged the ground to and fro.

Ion. How long is it since the babe was destroyed?

Cr. Thy age and his would measure out the self-same span, were he alive.

Ion. Hath she given birth to no other child since then?

Cr. The god doth wrong her; and wretched is she in having no child.

Ion. But what if Phoebus privily removed her child and is rearing it?

Cr. Then is he acting unfairly in keeping to himself alone a joy he ought to share.

Ion. Ah me! this misfortune sounds so like my own.

Cr. Thee too, fair sir, thy poor mother misses, I am sure.

Ion. Oh! call me not back to piteous thoughts I had forgotten.

Cr. I am dumb; proceed with that which touches my inquiry.

Ion. Dost know the one weak point in this thy story?

Cr. 'Tis all weak in that poor lady's case.

Ion. How should the god declare that which he wishes hidden?

Cr. He must, if here upon the tripod he sits for all Hellas to seek to.

Ion. He is ashamed of the deed; do not question him.

Cr. Woe, but his victim has her sorrows too.

Ion. There is none who will act as thy medium in this. For were Phoebus in his own temple proved a villain, he would justly wreak his vengeance on the man who expounded to thee his oracles; desist then, lady; we must not prophesy against the god's will, for it would be the height of folly in us, were we to try and make the gods against their will declare reluctant truths either by sacrifice of sheep at their altars, or by omens from birds. For those answers we strive to extort from heaven, lady, are goods that bring no blessing on our getting; but what they freely offer, these by way profit.

Ch. Many are the chances that befall the many tribes of men, and diverse are their forms. But scarce one happy scene canst thou find in all the life of man.

Cr. Ah! Phoebus, here as there art thou unjust to that absent sufferer whose cause I now am pleading. Thou didst not preserve thy child as in duty bound, nor wilt thou, for all thy prophetic skill, answer his mother's questioning, that if he be no more a mound may be raised o'er him, or if he live, he may some day be restored to his mother's eyes. In vain is this the home of oracles if the god prevents me from learning what I wish to ask. But lo! I see my noble lord Xuthus, nigh at hand, returning from the *hut of Trophonius*; say nothing, sir, to my husband of what I have told thee, lest I incur reproach for troubling about secrets, and the matter

take a different turn to that which I sou ht to give it For women stand towards men in a difficult position and the virtuous from being mingled with the wicked amongst us are hated such is our unhappy destiny

Enter XUTHUS

Xuthus First to the god all hail! for he must receive the first fruits of my salutation and next all hail to thee my wife! Has my delay in arriving caused thee alarm?

Cr By no means but thou art come at an anxious time Tell me what response thou bringest from Trophonius, touching our future hopes of mutual offspring

Xu He deigned not to forestal the prophecies of Phœbus This only did he say that neither thou nor I should return unto our house childless from the shrine

Cr Majestic mother of Phœbus to our journey grant success and may our previous dealings with thy son now find a better issue!

Xu It will be so but who acts as the god s spokesman here?

Ion I serve outside the shrine others within who stand near the tripod even the noblest of the Delphians chosen by lot sir stranger

Xu 'Tis well I have attained the utmost of my wishes I will go within for I am told that a victim has been slain in public before the temple for strangers and to-day—for it is a lucky day—I would fain receive the god s oracle Do thou my wife take branches of laurel and seated at the altars pray to the gods that I may carry home from Apollo s shrine an answer that bodeth well for offspring

Cr All this shall be Now at any rate if Loxias would retrieve his former sins even though he cannot be my friend entirely yet will I accept whate er he deigns to give because he is a god

Exeunt XUTHUS *and* CREUSA

Ion Why doth this stranger lady hint dark reproaches against the god unceasingly either out of affection for her on whose behalf she seeks the oracle or maybe because she is hiding something needing secrecy? Yet what have I to do with the dau h ter of Erechtheus? She is naught to me No I will go to the laver and from golden ewers sprinkle the holy water Yet must I warn Phœbus of what is happening to him he ravishes a maid and proves unfaithful to her and after secretly begetting a son leaves him to die O! Phœbus do not so but as thou art supreme follow in virtue s track for whosoever of mortal men transgresses him the gods punish How then can it be just that you should enact your laws for men and yourselves incur the charge of breaking them? Now I will put this case though it will never happen Wert thou wert Poseidon and Zeus the lord of heaven to make atonement to mankind for every act of lawless love ye would

ing the evil deeds of gods but rat
us such examples

Ch On thee I call Athena mi
throes no kindly goddess lent he
thou wert by Titan Prometheus
of Zeus Come O lady Victory c
shrine winging thy way from th
of Olympus to the city s streets
his altar on the centre of the worl
to pass beside the dance encircled
thou daughter of Latona to eth
goddesses fair sisters of Phœbus!
prayer fair maidens that the ancie
theus may obtain by clear oracl
children though late it come For
a settled source of all surpassing l
as see in their ancestral halls a sple
young parents blest with offsprin
their sires their wealth in due suc
children yea for they are a defen
ble and add a charm to weal a
fatherland a saving help in battle
the pomp of wealth or royal mat
nurture of noble children The ch
hor and him who thinks it good I
life amongst my children bles
wealth may I hold fast

Ye haunts of Pan and rocks ha
Macræ where Agraulos daught
lightly o er the green grass lawns
of Pallas to the music of the pi
what time thou Pan art piping
thine where a maiden once that ha
bus, unhappy mother! exposed he
sue of her woful wooing for birds
to rend a bloody banquet! Neve
told in woven tale or legend that
gods by daughters of earth have any

Enter ION

Ion Attendant maids that wate
mistress here at the steps of the tem
incense say hath Xuthus already
pod and the sanctuary or doth he s
to ask yet further of his childlessnes

Ch He is still in the temple s
passed this threshold yet But hark
step at the outlet of the door and
see my master this moment coming

Xu All hail! my son that word
first greeting to thee

Ion Tis well with me do but
and then both of us will be happy

Xu Give me thy hand to grasp t
brace

Ion Art thou in thy senses sir or l
ful god reft thee of them?

Xu I am in my senses for I hav

is not my own, but only finding my own that I love full well.

Ion. Hands off! or thou shalt feel an arrow pierce thy ribs.

Xu. Why dost thou shun me now that thou findest in me thy nearest and dearest?

Ion. I am not fond of schooling boors and crazy strangers.

Xu. Kill me, burn me; for if thou dost, thou wilt be thy father's murderer.

Ion. Thou my father indeed! Oh! is not news like this enough to make me laugh?

Xu. Not so; my tale as it proceeds, will prove to thee what I assert.

Ion. Pray what hast thou to tell me?

Xu. That I am thy own father and thou my very child.

Ion. Who says so?

Xu. Loxias, who gave thee nurture though thou wert my son.

Ion. Thou art thy own witness.

Xu. Nay, I have learnt the answer of the god.

Ion. Thou art mistaken in the dark riddle thou hast heard.

Xu. It seems then I do not hear aright.

Ion. What said Phoebus?

Xu. That the man who met me——

Ion. When and where?

Xu. As I came forth from the god's temple——

Ion. Well! what should happen to him?

Xu. Should be my own true son.

Ion. Thy own true son, or a gift from others?

Xu. A gift, but mine for all that.

Ion. Am I the first that thou didst meet?

Xu. I have met no other, my son.

Ion. Whence came this piece of luck?

Xu. To both of us alike it causes surprise.

Ion. Ah! but who was my mother?

Xu. I cannot tell.

Ion. Did not Phoebus tell thee that?

Xu. I was so pleased with this, I did not ask him that.

Ion. I must have sprung from mother earth.

Xu. The ground brings forth no children.

Ion. How can I be thine?

Xu. I know not; I refer it to the god.

Ion. Come, let us try another theme.

Xu. Better so, my son.

Ion. Didst thou ever indulge in illicit amours?

Xu. Yes, in the folly of youth.

Ion. Ere thou didst win Erechtheus' daughter?

Xu. Never since.

Ion. Could it be then thou didst beget me?

Xu. The time coincides therewith.

Ion. In that case how came I hither?

Xu. That puzzles me.

Ion. After that long journey too?

Xu. That, too, perplexes me.

Ion. Didst thou ever come to the Pythian rock?

Xu. Yes, to join in the mystic rites of Bacchus.

Ion. Didst thou lodge with one of the public hosts?

Xu. With one who at Delphi—

Ion. Initiated thee? or what is it thou sayest?

Xu. Among the frantic votaries of Bacchus.

Ion. Wert thou sober or in thy cups?

Xu. I had indulged in the pleasures of the wine-cup.

Ion. That is just the history of my birth.

Xu. Fate hath discovered thee, my son.

Ion. How came I to the temple?

Xu. Maybe the maid exposed thee.

Ion. I have escaped the shame of slavish birth.

Xu. Acknowledge then thy father, my son.

Ion. It is not right that I should mistrust the god.

Xu. Thou art right there.

Ion. What more can I desire—

Xu. Thine eyes now open to the sights they should.

Ion. Than from a son of Zeus to spring?

Xu. Which is indeed thy lot.

Ion. May I embrace the author of my being?

Xu. Aye, put thy trust in the god.

Ion. Hail to thee, father mine.

Xu. With joy that title I accept.

Ion. This day—

Xu. Hath made me blest.

Ion. Ah, mother dear! shall I ever see thee too? Now more than ever do I long to gaze upon thee, whoe'er thou art. But thou perhaps art dead, and I shall never have the chance.

Ch. We share the good luck of thy house; but still I could have wished my mistress too, and Erechtheus' line had been blest with children.

Xu. My son, albeit the god hath for thy discovery brought his oracle to a true issue and united thee to me, while thou, too, hast found what most thou dost desire, till now unconscious of it; still as touching this anxiety so proper in thee, I feel an equal yearning that thou, my child, may'st find thy mother and I the wife that bare thee unto me. Maybe we shall discover this, if we leave it to time. But now leave the courts of the god and this homeless life of thine and come to Athens, in accord one with thy father's wishes, for there his happy realm and bounteous wealth await thee; nor shalt thou be taunted with base origin and poverty to boot, because in one of these respects thou sometime lackest; but thou shalt be renowned alike for birth and wealth. Art silent? why dost fix thine eyes upon the ground? Thou art lost in thought, and by this sudden change from thy former cheerfulness, thou strikest thy father with dismay.

Ion. Things assume a different form according as we see them before us, or far off. I am glad at what has happened since I have found in thee a father; but hear my opinion on some points which I am now dreading. Athens, I am told—that glorious city of a native race—owns no alien stock; in which case I shall force my entrance there under a twofold disadvantage as an alien's son and base born as I am. Branded with this reproach, while as yet I am unsupported I shall get the name of a mere nobody, a son of nobodies; and if I win my way to the highest place in the state and seek to be some one, I shall be hated by

those who have no influence for superiority is galling while mongst men of worth who could show their wisdom but are silent and take no interest in politics I shall incur ridicule and be thought a fool for not keeping quiet in such a fault finding city Again if I win a name amongst the men of mark who are engaged in politics still more will jealous votes bar my progress for thus father is it ever wont to be they who have the city s ear and have already made their mark are most bitter against all rivals Again if I a stranger come to a home that knows me not and to that childless wife who before had thee as partner in her sorrow but now will feel the bitterness of having to bear her fortune all alone—how I ask shall I not fairly earn her hatred when I take my stand beside thee while she still childless sees thy dear pledge with bitter eyes and then thou have to choose between deserting me and regarding her or honouring me and utterly confounding thy home? How many a murder and death by deadly drugs have wives devised for husbands! Besides I pity that wife of thine father with her childless old age beginning she little deserves to pine in barrenness a daughter of a noble race That princely state we fondly praise is pleasant to the eye but yet in its mansions sorrow lurks for who is happy or by fortune blest that has to live his life in fear of violence with many a sidelong glance? Rather would I live among the common folk and taste their bliss than be a tyrant who delights in making evil men his friends and hates the good in terror of his life Perchance thou wilt tell me Gold outweighs all these evils and wealth is sweet I have no wish to be abused for holding tightly to my pelf nor yet to have the trouble of it Be mine a moderate fortune free from annoyance! Now hear the blessings father that here were mine first leisure man s chiefest joy with but moderate trouble no villain ever drove me from my path and that is a grievance hard to bear to make room and give way to sorry knaves My duty was to pray unto the gods or with mortal men converse a minister to their joys not to their sorrows And I was ever dismissing one batch of guests while another took their place so that I was always welcome from the charm of novelty That honesty which men must pray for even against their will custom and nature did conspire to plant in me in the sight of Phœbus Now when I think on this I deem that I am better here than there father So let me live on here for tis an equal charm to joy in high estate or in a humble fortune find a pleasure

Ch Well said! if only those I love find their happiness in thy statement of the case

Xu Cease such idle talk and learn to be happy for on that spot where I discovered thee my son will I begin the rites since I have chanced on the general banquet open to all comers and I will offer thy birth sacrifice which aforetime I left undone And now will I bring thee to the banquet as my guest and rejoice thy heart and take thee to the Athenian land as a visitor forsooth not as my own son For I will not grieve my wife in her childless sorrow by my good fortune. But in time will I seize a happy moment and prevail on her to let thee wield my sceptre o er the realm Thy name shall be Ion in accordance with what happened for that thou wert the first to cross my path as I came forth from Apollo s sanctuary Go gather every friend thou hast and with them make merry o er the flesh of sacrifice on the eve of thy departure from the town of Delphi On you ye handmaids silence I enjoin for if ye say one word to my wife death awaits you

Exit XUTHUS

Ion Well I will go one thing my fortune lacks, for if I find not her that gave me birth life is no life to me my father and if I may make the prayer Oh may that mother be a daughter of Athens! that from her I may inherit freedom of speech For if a stranger settle in a city free from aliens, even though in name he be a citizen yet doth he find himself tongue tied and debarred from open utterance

Exit ION

Ch Weeping and lamentation and the beginning of mourning I foresee when my mistress shall see her lord blest with a son while she is childless and forlorn What was this oracle thou didst vouchsafe prophetic son of Latona? Whence came this boy thy foster child who lingers in thy temple? who was his mother? I like not thy oracle I fear there is some treachery In terror I await the issue of this chance for strange are these tidings and strange it is that the god declares them to me. There is guile connected with this waif's fortune All must allow that Shall we good friends throw off disguise and tell our mistress this story about her husband in whom her all was centred and whose hopes poor lady she once shared? But now in misery is she plunged while he enjoys the smiles of fortune to hoary eld she drifteth fast while he her lord pays no regard to his loved ones—the wretch who came an alien to her house to share great wealth and failed to guard her fortunes! Perdition catch this traitor to my lady! never may he succeed in offering to the gods upon their blazin altar a hallowed cake with flames that augur well! He hall know to his cost my regard for my mistress Now are sire and new found son bent on the approaching feast Ho! ye peaks of Parnassus that rear your rocky heads to heaven where Bacchus with uplifted torch of blazing pine bounds nimbly amid his bacchanals that range by night! Never to my city come this boy! let him die and leave his young life as it dawns! For should our city fall on evil days this bringing in of strangers would supply it with a reason Enough enough for us Erechtheus line that erst held sway!

Enter CREUSA *and* OLD SERVANT

Cr Aged retainer of my father Erechtheus while yet he lived and saw the light of day mount to the god s prophetic shrine that thou mayst share my gladness if haply Loxias great king vouchsafe an answer touching my hopes of offspring for sweet it is to share with friends prosperity and sweet likewise to see a friendly face if any ill betide—which God forbid! As thou of yore didst tend my sire so

753 now thy mistress though I am, I take his place in reading it.

Old Servant. Daughter, thy manners bear good witness still to thy noble lineage; thou hast never brought shame upon those ancestors of thine, the children of the soil. A hand, I prithee, to the shrine! lend me thy aid! 'Tis a steep path thither; truly be thou the aid to guide my steps and make my weakness strong.

Cr. Come follow then, and look where thou art treading.

O. S. Behold! though my steps loiter, my thoughts take wings.

Cr. Lean on thy staff as thou climbest this winding path.

O. S. Even this staff is a blind guide, when I myself can scarcely see.

Cr. True, but do not yield through fatigue.

O. S. Never willingly, but I am not master of that which is mine no more.

Cr. Maidens mine, my trusty servants at the loom and web, declare to me how my lord hath fared as touching the question of offspring which brought us hither; for if ye give me good news, ye will cause joy to a mistress who will not prove faithless to her word.

Ch. O fortune!

O. S. The prelude to your speech is unlucky.

Ch. Woe is me!

O. S. Can it be that the oracles delivered to my master are working ill?

Ch. Enough! What are we to do with that which brings down death?

Cr. What means this piteous strain? wherefore this alarm?

Ch. Are we to speak or keep silence? What shall we do?

Cr. Speak, for thou hast somewhat to tell that touches me.

Ch. Then speak I will, though twice to die were mine. O mistress mine! never shalt thou hold a babe in thy arms or clasp him to thy breast.

Cr. Ah me! would I were dead!

O. S. My daughter!

Cr. O woe is me for my calamity! My sorrow is beyond what I suffer, and one that poisons life, good friends.

O. S. Ah me, my child, 'tis death to us!

Cr. Ah me! ah me! grief drives its weapon through this heart of mine.

O. S. Stay thy lamentations.

Cr. Nay, but sorrow lodges here.

O. S. Till we learn—

Cr. Ah, what further news is there for me?

O. S. Whether our master is in the same plight and shares thy misfortune, or thou art alone in thy misery.

Ch. On him, old sir, Loxias hath bestowed a son, and he is enjoying his good fortune apart from her.

Cr. Herein hast thou declared a further evil crowning all, a grief for me to mourn.

O. S. The child of whom thou speakest—is he some woman's destined babe, or did the god declare the fate of one already born?

Ch. A youth already born and grown to man's estate did Phoebus give to him; for I was there myself.

Cr. What sayest thou? nor tongue nor lip should speak the word thou tellest me.

O. S. And me. But declare more clearly how this oracle is finding its fulfilment, and say who is the child.

Ch. Whomso thy husband first should meet as he issued from the shrine, him the god gave him for his son.

Cr. Ah me! my fate, it seems, has doomed me to a childless life, and all forlorn am I to dwell in my halls, without an heir.

O. S. To whom did the oracle refer? whom did our poor lady's husband meet? how and where did he see him?

Ch. Dear mistress mine, dost know that youth that was sweeping yonder shrine? He is that son.

Cr. Oh! for wings to cleave the liquid air beyond the land of Hellas, away to the western stars, so keen the anguish of my soul, my friends!

O. S. Dost know the name his father gave to him, or is that left yet unsettled and unsaid?

Ch. He called him Ion, because he was the first to cross his path.

O. S. Who is his mother?

Ch. That I cannot say. But—to tell thee all I know, old sir—her lord is gone, with furtive step, into the hallowed tent, there to offer on this child's behalf such gifts and victims as are offered for birth, and with his new found son to celebrate the feast.

O. S. Mistress mine, we are betrayed by thy husband, fellow-sufferers thou and I; 'tis a deep-laid plot to outrage us and drive us from Erechtheus' halls. And this I say not from any hatred of thy lord, but because I bear thee more love than him; for he, after coming as a stranger to thy city and thy home, and wedding thee and of thy heritage taking full possession, has been detected in a secret marriage with another woman, by whom he hath children. His secret will I now disclose: when he found thee barren, he was not content to share with thee thy hard lot, but took to himself a slave to be his stealthy paramour, and thus begat a son, whom he sent abroad, giving him to some Delphian maid to nurse; and to escape detection, the child was dedicated to the god and reared in his temple. But when he heard his boy was grown to manhood, he persuaded thee to come hither to inquire about thy childless state. And after this, 'twas not the god that lied, but thy husband, who long had been rearing the child, and he it was that wove this tissue of falsehood, intending, if he were detected, to refer it to the god, where as if he escaped exposure, to repel all odium, he meant to give the sovereignty in this son of his. Likewise he devised a new his name, coined to suit the circumstances, Ion, because, as he asserts, he met him on his way.

Ch Ah! how I ever hate the wicked who plot unrighteousness and then cunningly trick it out Far rather would I have a virtuous friend of no great intellect than a knave of subtler wit

O S Of all thy wretched fate this will be the crowning sorrow the bringing to thy house to be its lord some slave girl's child whose mother is unknown himself of no account For this evil had been to itself confined had he persuaded thee pleading thy childlessness to let him establish in the house some high born mother's son or if this had displeased thee he ought to have sought a daughter of Æolus in marriage Wherefore must thou now put thy woman's wit to work either take the dagger or by guile or poison slay thy husband and his son ere they deal out death to thee since if thou spare him thou wilt lose thy own life for when two foes meet beneath one roof one or the other must rue it Myself too am ready to share this labour with thee and to help destroy the child when I have made my way into the chamber where he is furnishing the feast and so repaying my masters for my maintenance I am willing either to die or still behold the light of life 'Tis but a single thing that brands the slave with shame—his name in all else no upright slave is a whit worse than free born men

Ch I too beloved mistress am ready to share thy fate be it death or victory

Cr Ah! my suffering soul! how am I to keep silence? Am I to disclose the secrets of my love and lose all claim to modesty? What is there to keep me back any longer? With whom have I to pit myself in virtue's lists? Hath not my husband proved untrue? Home and children both are torn from me all hope is dead I have not realized my wish to set the matter straight by hushing up my former union and saying naught about my son of sorrow No! by the starry seat of Zeus by her whose home is on my rocks and by the hallowed strand of Triton's mere with brimming flood I will no more conceal my love for if I can lift that burden from my breast I shall rest easier With tears my eyes are streaming and my heart is wrung with anguish for the treacherous counsels both of men and gods—traitors they! as I will show ungrateful traitors to their loves!

O! thou who dost awake that tuneful lyre with seven strings till to its sweet note of music the lifeless pegs of wild ox horn resound again thou child of Latona to yon bright orb of thine will I publish thy reproach Yes I saw thee come the glint of gold upon thy locks as I was gathering in my folded robe the saffron blooms that blazed like flowers of gold and by my lily wrist didst thou catch me and ledst me to the cavern's bed what time I cried aloud upon my mother's name—thou a god to mate with me in shameless wise to pleasure lady Cypris! Then to my sorrow I bore thee a son whom though anguish thrilled my mother's breast I cast upon that bed of thine where thou didst join in woful wedlock this unhappy maid *Ah! woe is me! that poor* babe I bare thee is now no more winged fowls have [illegible] and devoured him but thou art gaily carolling unto thy lyre some song of joy Hark! thou son of Latona to thee I call for that thou dispensest warnings there at thy golden throne on earth's centre planted will *I proclaim a word into thy ear O! thou* wicked bridegroom who art bringing to my husband's house an heir though from him thou hast received no boon while that child of thine and mine hath died unrecognized a prey to carrion birds his *mother's swaddling clothes all lost Delos hates thee* now thy bay tree loves thee not whose branches sprout beside the tufted palm where in holy throes Latona big with child by Zeus gave birth to thee

Ch Ah me! what store of sorrows is here disclosed *enough to draw a tear from every eye!*

O S Daughter with pity am I filled as I gaze upon thy face my reason leaves me for just as I am striving to lighten my spirit of its sea of troubles, comes another wave astern and catches me by reason of thy words *for no sooner hadst thou uttered this* tale of present troubles than thou didst turn aside into a fresh track of other woes What is it thou sayest? What charge against Apollo dost thou bring? What child is this thou dost assert that thou didst bear? *Where was it in the city that thou didst expose him* for beasts to rejoice o'er his burial? Tell me once again

Cr Old friend although to meet thine eye I am ashamed yet will I tell thee

O S Full well I know how to lend my friends a generous sympathy

Cr Then hearken dost know a cave toward the north of Cecrops' rock that we call Macræ?

O S I know it there is the shrine of Pan and his altar hard by

Cr That was the scene of my dire conflict

O S What conflict? see how my tears start forth to meet thy words

Cr Phœbus forced me to a woful marriage

O S Was it then this my daughter that I noticed myself?

Cr I know not but I will tell thee if thou speak the truth

O S At the time thou wert mourning in secret some hidden complaint?

Cr Yes, twas then this trouble happened which now I am declaring to thee

O S How then didst conceal thy union with Apollo?

Cr I bore a child hear me patiently old friend

O S Where? and who helped thy travail? or didst thou labour all alone?

Cr All alone in the cave where I became a wife

O S Where is the child? that thou mayst cease thy childless state

Cr Dead old friend to beasts exposed

O S Dead? did Apollo evil god no help afford?

Cr None my boy is in the halls of Hades

O S Who then exposed him? surely not thyself

Cr Myself when neath the gloom of night I had *wrapped him in my robe*

O S Did no one share thy secret of the babe's exposure?

Cr. Ill-fortune and secrecy alone.

O. S. How couldst thou in the cavern leave thy babe?

Cr. Ah! how? but still I did with many a word of pity uttered o'er him.

O. S. Oh for thy hard heart! Oh for the god's, more hard than thine!

Cr. Hadst thou but seen the babe stretch forth his hands to me!

O. S. To find thy mother's breast to nestle in thy arms?

Cr. Being kept therefrom he suffered grievous wrong from me.

O. S. How camest thou to think of casting forth thy babe?

Cr. Methought the god would save his own begotten child.

O. S. Ah me! what storms assail thy family's prosperity!

Cr. Why weepest thou, old man, with head close veiled?

O. S. To see the sorrows of thy sire and thee.

Cr. Such is our mortal life; naught abideth in one stay.

O. S. Daughter, let us cease to dwell on themes of woe.

Cr. What must I do? Misfortune leaves us helpless.

O. S. Avenge thee on the god who first did injure thee.

Cr. How can I, weak mortal as I am, outrun those mightier powers?

O. S. Set fire to Apollo's awful sanctuary.

Cr. I am afraid; my present sorrows are enough for me.

O. S. Then what thou canst, that dare—thy husband's death.

Cr. Nay, I do respect his former love in the days when he was good and true.

O. S. At least then, slay the boy who hath appeared to supplant thee.

Cr. How can I? would it were possible! how I wish it were!

O. S. Arm thy followers with daggers.

Cr. I will about it; but where is the deed to be done?

O. S. In the sacred tent where he is feasting his friends.

Cr. The murder will be too public, and slaves are poor support.

O. S. Ah! thou art turning coward. Devise some scheme thyself.

Cr. Well, I too have subtle plans that cannot fail.

O. S. If both conditions they fulfil, I will assist thee.

Cr. Hearken then; knowest thou the battle of the earth-born men?

O. S. Surely, the fight at Phlegra waged by giants against the gods.

Cr. There Earth brought Gorgon forth, a dreadful fiend grim.

O. S. To aid her sons maybe and cause the gods hard toil?

Cr. Yea; and Pallas, daughter of Zeus, slew the monster.

O. S. What savage form had it assumed?

Cr. A breast-plate of vipers fenced its body.

O. S. Is this the tale I heard in days of yore?

Cr. That Athena wears its skin upon her corslet.

O. S. Is it this that Pallas wears, called by men her *aegis*?

Cr. This was the name it received that day she came to do battle for the gods.

O. S. How daughter, can this harm thy enemies?

Cr. Hast heard of Erichthonius, or no? of course thou hast.

O. S. Him whom Earth produced the founder of thy race?

Cr. To him whilst yet a babe did Pallas give—

O. S. Ha! what? thou hast something yet to add.

Cr. Two drops of Gorgon's blood.

O. S. What power could they exert on the nature of a human creature?

Cr. The one with death is fraught, the other cures disease.

O. S. What held them when she tied them to the child's body?

Cr. With links of gold she fastened them; this to my sire did Erichthonius give.

O. S. And at his death it came to thee?

Cr. Yea, and here at my wrist I wear it.

O. S. How works the spell of this double gift of Pallas?

Cr. Each drop of gore which trickled from the hollow vein—

O. S. What purpose does it serve? what virtue does it carry?

Cr. Wards off disease and nourishes man's life.

O. S. What doth that second drop effect of which thou madest mention?

Cr. It kills, for it is venom from the Gorgon's snakes.

O. S. Dost thou carry this charm mixed in one phial, or separate?

Cr. Separate; for good is no companion for evil.

O. S. Daughter dear, thou art fully armed with all thou needest.

Cr. By this must the boy die, and thou must do the deadly deed.

O. S. How and where? thine it is to speak, and mine to dare and do.

Cr. In Athens, when to my house he comes.

O. S. That is not wisely said; I may object to thy plan as thou to mine.

Cr. How so? Hast thou the same mistrust that I experience?

O. S. Thou wilt get the credit of his death, although thou slay him not.

Cr. True; men say stepdames are jealous of their husbands' children.

O. S. Kill him here, then, that so thou mayst deny the murder.

Cr. Well, thus I do anticipate the pleasure.

O. S. Yea, and thou wilt from thy husband keep the secret he would keep from thee.

Cr Dost know then what to do? Take from my arm this golden bracelet Athena s gift some ancient craftsman s work and seek the spot where my lord is offering secret sacrifice then when their feasting is o er and they are about to pour drink offering to the gods take this phial in thy robe and pour it into the young man s goblet not for all but for him alone providing a separate draught who thinks to *lord it o er my house And if once it pass his lips* never shall he come to glorious Athens but here abide of life bereft

O S Go thou within the house of our public hosts I the while will set about my appointed task On! aged foot grow young again in action for all that time saith no to thee Go aid thy mistress against her enemy help slay and drag him from her house Tis well to honour piety in the hour of fortune *but when thou wouldst harm thy foe no law* doth block thy path

Exeunt CREUSA *and* OLD SERVANT

Ch Daughter[1] of Demeter goddess of highways queen as thou art of haunting powers of darkness oh! guide as well the hand that fills by day a cup of death against those to whom my revered mistress is sending a philtre of the gore that dripped from hellish Gorgon s severed head yea gainst him who *would obtrude upon the halls of the Erechthidæ* Never may alien from alien stock lord it o er my city no! none save noble Erechtheus sons! For if this deadly deed and my lady s aims pass unfulfilled and the right moment for her daring go by and with it the hope which now sustains her either will she seize the whetted knife or fasten the noose about her neck and by ending one sorrow by another will go down to other phases of existence For never will that daughter of *a noble line while life is hers* endure within the sunshine of her eyes the sight of alien rulers in her halls I blush for that god of song if this stranger is to witness the torch dance[2] that heralds in the twentieth dawn around Callichorus fair springs a sleepless votary in midnight revels what time the star lit firmament of Zeus the moon and Nereus fifty daughters that trip it lightly o er the sea and the eternal rivers tides join the dance in honour of the maiden with the crown of gold and her majestic mother where this vagabond by Phœbus favoured thinks to reign entering into other m n s hard toil. Look to it all ye bards who in malicious strains expose our amours and unholy *bonds of lawless love see how far our virtue sur*passes man s disloyalty Change the burden of your song and keep your spiteful verse to brand man s faithlessness For this scion of the stock of Zeus shows himself a heedless wight denying to the mistress of his halls the lot of mutual offspring and paying all his court to some strange love hath gotten him a bastard son

Enter SERVANT

[1]Hecate

[2]Bacchus was escorted with a solemn torch procession from Athens to Eleusis on the 20th day of the month Boedromion.

Servant Ladies of another land where may I find your mistress daughter of Erechtheus? For I have searched each nook and corner of this town and cannot find her

Ch What news my fellow thrall? why that hurried gait? what tidings bringest thou?

S I am pursued the rulers of this land are seeking her to stone her to death

Ch Alas what is thy tale? say not we are detected in our secret plot for murdering the boy?

Se Thou hast guessed aright nor wilt thou be the last to share the trouble

Ch How was the hidden scheme laid bare?

Se The god found means to master wrong with right unwilling to see his shrine polluted

Ch How so? I do conjure thee tell us all For if to die or yet to live be ours twere sweeter so when *we know all*

Se Soon as Xuthus husband of Creusa had left the god s prophetic shrine taking with him his new found son to hold the feast and sacrifice that he designed to offer to the gods himself departed to the place where leaps the Bacchic flame with blood of sacrifice to dew the double peaks of Dionysus for the son now offered to his gaze and thus he spake

My son abide thou here and raise a spacious tent *by craftsmen s toiling skill and if I remain long time* away after I have sacrificed to the gods of thy birth let the feast be spread for all friends present Therewith he took the heifers and went his way Meantime his stripling son in solemn form set up with upright stays the tent inclosed but not with walls taking good heed to guard it gainst the blazing mid day sun nor less against his westering beams the limit of his course An oblong space of five score feet *he meted out so that it contained ten* thousand feet within that measure s square as science phrases it intending to invite all Delphi to the feast Then from the temple treasury tapestry he took and therewith made a shelter wondrous sight to see First o er the roof tree he threw a canopy of robes an offering Heracles the son of Zeus had brought unto the god from his Amazonian spoils On them was broidered many a pictured scene to wit Heaven marshalling his host of stars upon the vaulted sky there was the sun god urging on his steeds toward his fiery goal the bright star of evening at his heels. Night too in sable robes went hurrying by drawn by a single pair and the stars did bear her company *Across the zenith a Pleiad sailed and Orion* too with falchion dight was there above was the bear making his tail to turn upon the golden pole Up shot the moon s full face that parts the months in twain there too the Hyades showed their unerring light to mariners and Dawn that brings the morning back was chasing the stars before her Next on the sides he hung yet other tapestry barbarian ships bearing down on the fleet of Hellas and monsters half man half beast the capture of the Thracian steeds the hunting of savage stags and lions fierce while at the entry Cecrops close to his daughters was wreathing his coils an offering of some Athen

tan tary and in the midst of the banquet hall he set goblets of gold while a herald hasted and invited to the feast all citizens who would come Then when the tent was full they decked themselves with garland and took their fill of the rich viands. Anon after they had put from them the pleasure of eating came an old man and stood in the midst where his officious zeal provoked loud laughter among the guests for he would draw from the drinking pitchers water to wash the hands withal and was wasting as cense the liquid myrrh and in his charge he took the golden beakers, setting himself unasked to this office Now when they were come to the time for the flute players and the general libation cried out that aged servitor Hence with these tiny cups! bring larger goblets, that our guests may find a quicker route to joyousness. Thereon came servants bending neath the weight of goblets chased with silver and golden chalices and that old man as if to do his youthful lord a special service chose out and offered to him a brimming bumper when he had cast into the wine that potent philtre which men say his mistress gave to him to end the young man's day on earth and no man knew of this but just as he so lately found held in his hand the drink-offering the others following suit some servant there uttered a word of evil import whereat the stripling as one who had been reared within the holy fane amid reputed seers, deemed this an omen and bade them fill a fresh goblet, but that first drink-offering to the god he poured upon the ground and bade all other do the like And silence stole upon them while we with the true Phoenician wine were filling high the sacred bowls. While thus we were busied comes a flight of doves and settles in the tent for these dwell fearlessly in the courts of Loxias Soon as the guest had poured away the liquor out upon it those thirsty birds did dip their beaks therein and drain it gathering it up into their feathered throats Now all the rest received no hurt from the god's libation but that one that settled on the spot where the son new found had poured his wine no sooner had tasted thereof than convulsive seized her feathered frame and she went mad and screaming loud uttered strange unwonted cries and all the feasters gathered there marvelled to see the bird's cruel agony for she lay writhing in the toils of death, and her red claws relaxed their hold

Forthwith the son vouchsafed by oracles bared his arm by casting off his cloak and stretched it out across the board crying Who was it tried to slay me? Proclaim it old man! thine officious hand was the officious cause thou didst offer the cup whence I took the cup. With that he caught the graybeard by the arm and set to search him that he might take the old man red handed in the act So was he detected and under stress confessed the daring deed of Creusa's daring guile and all the trick of the poisoned draught. Forth rushed the young man, whom the oracle of Loxias had assigned, taking with him the banqueters, and took his stand amid the Delphian nobles mad and said O hallowed soil a stranger woman daughter of Erechtheus, seeks to poison me And the lords of Delphi decreed by general vote that my mistress should be hurled from the rock to die because she strove to slay the priest and compass his death in the temple So now is the whole city seeking her who hath to her sorrow sped a hapless journey for coming to crave the boon of offspring from Phoebus she hath lost her life and children too

Ch Ah me! I see no way at all to turn death's hand aside all, all ere this is brought to light owing to that fatal draught of the wine god's juice mixed for death with drops of viper's gore quick to slay detected is our offering to the dead so me my life must end in woe while death by stoning waits my mistress How can I escape? Shall I take wings and fly away or creep beneath the darksome caverns of the earth striving to shun the doom of death by stoning? or shall I mount the car drawn by swiftest steeds or embark upon a ship? No man may hide his guilt save when some god of his own will steals him away Ah! my poor mistress! what suffering now awaits thy soul? Must then our wish to work another harm end in our own discomfiture as justice doth decree?

Enter CREUSA

Cr My trusty maids the men of death are on my track, the vote of Delphi goes against me they give me up to die

Ch Unhappy one! we know thy sad mischance how thou art placed

Cr Oh! whither can I fly? for scarce had I the start of my pursuers from the house in my race for life, tis by stealth alone that I have thus far escaped my foes

Ch Whether shouldst thou fly except to the altar?

Cr What good is that to me?

Ch To slay a suppliant is forbidden

Cr Aye but the law has given me over to death

Ch Only if thou fall into their hands.

Cr Look! here they come my cruel champions of vengeance eager by brandishing their swords

Ch Sit thee down upon the altar of burnt-offering! for if thou art slain there thou wilt fix upon thy murderers the stain of blood Patience but we must bear our fortune

Enter ION

Io O father Cephissus with the bull shaped head what viper is this thy child or dragon with fiery eyes that darts a murderous gleam in whose heart is throned dread daring poisonous as those Gorgon drops of venom wherewith she sought to compass my death Seize her that the peaks of Parnassus may card the flowing tresses of her hair for there shall she be hurled headlong amid the rocks. My luck star hath kept me from going to Athens there to fall beneath the power of a step-mother For I have gauged thy feelings towards me—the full extent of thy bitter hostility—whilst yet amongst my friends for hadst thou once shut me up within thy house my road to Hades halls had led direct from thence This altar shall not save thee no yet Apollo's courts for that pity thou implorest cries out more loudly for me and my mother who though

Cr Dost know then what to do? Take from my arm this golden bracelet Athena s gift some ancient craftsman s work and seek the spot where my lord is offering secret sacrifice then when their feasting is o er and they are about to pour drink offering to the gods take this phial in thy robe and pour it into the young man s goblet not for all but for him alone providing a separate draught who thinks to lord it o er my house And if once it pass his lips never shall he come to glorious Athens but here abide of life bereft

O S Go thou within the house of our public hosts I the while will set about my appointed task On! aged foot grow young again in action for all that time saith no to thee Go aid thy mistress against her enemy help slay and drag him from her house Tis well to honour piety in the hour of fortune but when thou wouldst harm thy foe no law doth block thy path

Exeunt CREUSA *and* OLD SERVANT

Ch Daughter[1] of Demeter goddess of highways queen as thou art of haunting powers of darkness oh! guide as well the hand that fills by day a cup of death against those to whom my revered mistress is sending a philtre of the gore that dripped from hellish Gorgon s severed head yea gainst him who would obtrude upon the halls of the Erechthidæ Never may alien from alien stock lord it o er my city no! none save noble Erechtheus sons! For if this deadly deed and my lady s aims pass unfulfilled and the right moment for her daring go by and with it the hope which now sustains her either will she seize the whetted knife or fasten the noose about her neck and by ending one sorrow by another will go down to other phases of existence For never will that daughter of a noble line while life is hers endure within the sunshine of her eyes the sight of alien rulers in her halls I blush for that god of song if this stranger is to witness the torch-dance[2] that heralds in the twentieth dawn around Callichorus fair springs a sleepless votary in midnight revels what time the star lit firmament of Zeus the moon and Nereus fifty daughters that trip it lightly o er the sea and the eternal rivers tides join the dance in honour of the maiden with the crown of gold and her majestic mother where this vagabond by Phœbus favoured thinks to reign entering into other men s hard toil Look to it all ye bards who in malicious strains expose our amours and unholy bonds of lawless love see how far our virtue surpasses man s disloyalty Change the burden of your song and keep your spiteful verse to brand man s faithlessness For this scion of the stock of Zeus shows himself a heedless wight denying to the mistress of his halls the lot of mutual offspring and paying all his court to some strange love hath gotten him a bastard son

Enter SERVANT

Servant Ladies of another land where may I find your mistress daughter of Erechtheus? For I have searched each *nook and corner of this town* and cannot find her

Ch What news my fellow thrall? why that hurried gait? what tidings bringest thou?

S I am pursued the rulers of this land are seeking *her to stone her to death*

Ch Alas what is thy tale? say not we are detected in our secret plot for murdering the boy?

Se Thou hast guessed aright nor wilt thou be the last to share the trouble

Ch How was the hidden scheme laid bare?

Se The god found means to master wrong with right unwilling to see his shrine polluted

Ch How so? I do conjure thee tell us all For if to die or yet to live be ours twere sweeter so when we know all

Se Soon as Xuthus husband of Creusa had left the god s prophetic shrine taking with him his new found son to hold the feast and sacrifice that he designed to offer to the gods himself departed to *the place where leaps the Bacchic flame* with blood of sacrifice to dew the double peaks of Dionysus for the son now offered to his gaze and thus he spake

My son abide thou here and raise a spacious tent by craftsmen s toiling skill and if I remain long time away after I have sacrificed to the gods of thy birth let the feast be spread for all friends present Therewith he took the heifers and went his way Meantime his stripling son in solemn form set up with upright stays the tent inclosed but not with walls taking good heed to guard it gainst the blazing mid day sun nor less against his westering beams the limit of his course an oblong space of five score feet he meted out so that it contained ten thousand feet within that measure s square as science phrases it intending to invite all Delphi to the feast Then from the temple treasury tapestry he took and therewith made a shelter wondrous sight to see First o er the roof tree he threw a canopy of robes an offering Heracles the son of Zeus had brought unto the god from his Amazonian spoils On them was broidered many a pictured scene to wit Heaven marshalling his host of stars upon the vaulted sky there was the sun god urging on his steeds toward his fiery goal the bright star of evening at his heels Night too in sable robes went hurrying by drawn by a single pair and the stars did bear her company Across the zenith a Pleiad sailed and Orion too with falchion dight was there above was the bear making his tail to turn upon the golden pole Up shot the moon s full face that parts the months in twain there too the Hyades showed their *unerring light* to mariners and Dawn that brings the mornin back was chasing the stars before her Next on the sides he hung yet other tapestry barbarian ships bearing down on the fleet of Hellas and monsters *half man half beast the capture of the* Thracian steeds the hunting of savage stags and lions fierce while at the entry Cecrops close to his daughters was wreathing his coils an offering of some Athen

[1]Hecate

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un votary and in the mul t of the banquet f ll he set goblet of g ld while a h rald h sted and invited to the feast all c t z ns wl o would come Tl en f n the tent w s full they decked tl mselves with g rl nds and took th ir f ll of the r ch viands Anon aft r they had put from tl m the pl as re of eating cam an ld man and stood in their m d t wherel is off ous zeal pro ok d loud la gl ter among the guests for he would draw from th drinking pitchers w t r to w h the hands with la l w s wa ti g as s cense the leq I myrrh and in h s charge he t k the g ld n be kers setting l mself to a k f to th s *Ac* I ow t n th y were come to the t n f r th fl te play rs a l the general l bation ert l out that a ol serv tor Il ce with th se tiny cups l ring larg r g blets th t our g ests may find a q cker rout t joym n e s Th re m came servants bend i g neath the t le f g ll c chased with silver and g ld e chal s and that ld man as if t l s youth f l lord a pecial servic ch se out and ff red t f m a b mm g bumper wh n e l a l ca t into the th t pot nt p ltire which men say l s m tress g ve t l m s and the y n g man s lays on rth and n man knew f th but j st as he so fa ly f nd h ld n t sl and the drink offering the oth follow g s t some servant there uttered a w d f ev l import whereat th stripl ng a one ho had been re r l with n the shrine amid reput l see d c me l th s an omen and bad tl em f ll a fr sh b ker but that first drink ff ring to the g l he p o ed upon the ground and bad all others do th like And si nce tole upon tl em wl le we with w t r and Phre scian wi e were f ll g bigh th s *red bowls* Wh l th we were bu ied c me a fl gl t of doves nd settl s in th tent f r these dw ll fear *lly in the c* *t Al* n *u* So m as tl g est f d pou ed away tl l sc n e juice those th rsty bir ls d l l p their beaks th rei de wi g it p int tl *u feathered* thr at Now ll th r e c e es l no l it f om the god s libat on but one that settl l on th *y* a he ettl son ew f und had poure l l is win no w *ros* had ta te l thereof th n on ul so s e y l h s feathered form and h went mad and scre m g loud uttered str g w nted cr es and all the fe *sts gathered* there marv lled to se the bird *s l* *my for* the lay writh n in th t l f death nd h red l wit l lth l l ld

I w th th s son f l by oracl s bar l h m by ca ting ff cl k nd rett l it out as th *brach* cry g Wl w ut t e t l y me? I *st* me ce ld ret f s th w th fl

* ou zeal and th the hand from wl ich I took th c p With that l b th g y l d by the m ndsa sa *ar* l g t m that f n gl t take tl old ma Th l l tl art Now l ed t r l l nd t r on c n t s f s l ar l Creusa s d r g d d nd tl le r ck f tl f son l d t s l th rout ed th y m whom th w de l Som t l w e *vagne* l k with f m th l q t n nd nd g m l th Delphic n tles ma l k g *Oh* ll me l w f a st n t woma daughter *A* f r chthen se k to p son me" And the l r ls of Delphi decreed l y g neral vote that my m stress sl n ld be l url f from the rock t die be cause sl e str e t lay the priest a d c mpass l is leath in the temple So now is the wl le city se k ing l r wl hath t f r norr w *spe* l a l *aj* l st r ney f r com ng t c rave the l son e f ff pring from Phoel us sl hath lost her l fe and ch ldren t o

Ch Ah m f f se n way at all to turn death s hand a vle all all ere th s is brought to l gl t owing to that f tal draught of the wine g l s juice mixed f r death with le pe l v iper e g re q uck t y clay d t cted s c rifice g t the f ad f r m my ff m s t end in w e wl ile l ath l y st on ng waits my m tre s ll w can l esc pe? Shall l t ke wings and fly away r ce p l n at tl e darksome caverns of tl earth stri ng to sl in the l m f l ath l y ston ng? or shall I m unt the car drawn l y swift t steeds or en l rk up n a ship? No man may h le l is g lt save when some god f l is own will ste ls f m away Ah! my poor m tre sl what suff ring n w waits thy soul? M t th n our wi h to work an ther harm end in our own d *sc* *omfiture* as j stice l th l cree?

Enter CREUSA

Cr My trusty ma l tl men f d at are on my tr ck the v te f Delphi goes ag n t me they g ve me up t de

Ch Unhappy n l we know thy sa l misch nce how thou art pl c l

Cr Oh! wl th r can I fly? f r scarce had I the start f my pur iers f om the house in my race for l f rt l y st alth l one that I have th s far escaped my f es

Ch Wl re should st thou fly except to the altar?

Cr What g l ist that to me?

Ch To slay a suppliant is f rbidd n

Cr Aye but tl law ha g ven me ov r to death

Ch O ly if th u f ll into th ir hand

Cr Look l re th y com cru l champions of vengeance g tly brand f ng th *ir sw* rds

Ch Sit thee l wn upon the altar f l rnt-offer g? f r if th u rt lain th re th u wilt fix upon th y murderers th stain f bl x lg ltiness l ut we mu t bear our fort ne

Enter ION

Ion O f th r Cephiss s with the l ll sl ape l l ad wl at a viper is th s th y el kl drag n with fiery eyes that f r a murd rous gl am in wl ose hea t s th m l is carnate learn n xious as the Gorgon drops f ve om wh rewith she sou l t t *to* *c n pass* my l ath Se ze l r that the peaks f l ar na s my ce rl the fl g tresses f l r hair fr thence hall I be h rl d l wn along am l st r cks My l ky star hath k pt m from g ng to Atl n th r to fall beneath tl power f a st p mother For I hav gau l th y f l g t *measure* of th y—yet l s yet amongst my f iends l re ha l st thou once tl r m up with n thy l use my r ul t Had st halls had sl l sent *from* th nce Th s altar sh ll not sa e th e nor yet Apollo s court for that p ty the st ingle est cries l m rel lly for m and my moth r wl o though

Cr Dost know then what to do? Take from my arm *this golden bracelet* Athena s gift some ancient craftsman s work and seek the spot where my lord is offering secret sacrifice then when their feasting is o er and they are about to pour drink offering to the gods take this phial in thy robe and pour it into the young man s goblet not for all but for him alone providing a separate draught who thinks to lord it o er my house And if once it pass his lips never shall he come to glorious Athens but here abide of life bereft

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Servant Ladies of another land where may I find your mistress daughter of Erechtheus? For I have searched each nook and corner of this town and cannot find her

Ch What news my fellow thrall? why that hurried gait? what tidings bringest thou?

S I am pursued the rulers of this land are seeking her to stone her to death

Ch Alas what is thy tale? say not we are detected in our secret plot for murdering the boy?

Se Thou hast guessed aright nor wilt thou be the last to share the trouble

Ch How was *the hidden scheme laid bare?*

Se The god found means to master wrong with right unwilling to see his shrine polluted

Ch How so? I do conjure thee tell us all For if to die or yet to live be ours twere sweeter so when we know all

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My son abide thou here and raise a spacious tent by craftsmen s toiling skill and if I remain long time away *after I have sacrificed to the gods of thy* birth let the feast be spread for all friends present Therewith he took the heifers and went his way Meantime his stripling son in solemn form set up with upright stays the tent inclosed *but not with walls*, taking good heed to guard it gainst the blazing mid day sun nor less against his westering beams the limit of his course an oblong space of five score feet he meted out so that it contained ten thousand feet within that measure s square as science phrases it intending to invite all Delphi to the feast Then from the temple treasury tapestry he took and therewith made a shelter wondrous sight to see First o er the roof tree he threw a canopy of robes an offering Heracles the son of Zeus had brought unto the god from his Amazonian spoils On them was broidered many a pictured scene to wit Heaven marshalling his host of stars upon the vaulted sky there was the sun god urging on his steeds toward his fiery goal the bright star of evening at his heels Night too in sable robes went hurrying by drawn by a single pair and the stars did bear her company Across the zenith a Pleiad sailed and Orion too with falchion dight was there above was the bear making his tail to turn upon the golden pole Up shot the moon s full face that parts the months in twain there too the Hyades showed their unerring light *to mariners and Dawn* that brings the morning back was chasing the stars before her Next on the sides he hung yet other tapestry barbarian ships bearing down on the fleet of Hellas and monsters *half man half beast the capture of the* Thracian steeds the hunting of savage stags and lions fierce while at the entry Cecrops close to his daughters was wreathing his coils an offering of some Athen

[1] Hecate

[2] Bacchus was escorted with a solemn torch procession from Athens to Eleusis on the 20th day of the month Boedromion.

P P Yes, for now the deity so wills it thou h not before.

Jon Hail thou day of mons blest to me!

P P Take th n the clies and seek thy m ther d.ligentl And when thou ha t t a ersed Asia and th bounds of Europe thou wilt learn th for thy self for the god s sake I rea ed thee m ch ld and now to thee d I entrust these t l es, whi h he w lled that I should take into m saf ke p g w thou t be bidden why he willed t I cannot t ll thee For no livin soul w st that I had them in my pos session nor yet their h di place And no far well! as a m th r might h r child so I g eet thee The start point of th ir qu rs for thy mother must be this first was it a Delphian maid that gave birth t thee and exposed thee in this temple n xt was t a daughter f Hellas at all That s all that I and Phoeb s, wh sha es in th lot can lo f r thee

Exit PYTHIAN PRIESTESS

I Ah me! th tears st eam from m es when I think of the day my mother bore me s the f u t of her secr t lov onl to sm g le h babe away prsil without sucklin it nameles I led a serv ant s life in the court of the god H ser ce truly s kind! yet was my fo t ne h a f just when I ou ht t ha e lain softl n a m the arms, t st g somewhat of the j s of lif wa f d pri ed f a fond mothe lost nme ca N r less sh pre to sorrow that ba me sent he hath suff ed th self same pa n for n f the joy son m ht b Now will I tak and bear this a k unt th god a an offeri g that her I may d s er nau ht that I would rather not For f haply m mothe pro es to be som sla g k twe wo se to find he out than let her est silenc O! Phoebus, to thy t mple do I dedicat thi k Y t wh ? th s s t wa against the god s ntention h sa ed these t ken f my mother for my sak I must und th lid nd be t th ort For that wh h f t dains, I ma n er erstep O! hallowed wreath nd f t n n s th t ha kept so saf these lies dea to m wh ah! wh wer y hidd from m ? B hold the co erin f this rounded W! N si n f e ar he own t some mirac1 deed hath not tou hed these chap l t nd yet t ion enou h sin these were t ed a a

Cr Ha! what unlooked fo si ht he ?

I Peace wo na ! now est tho art my even

Cr S len is no for me Bid m t be still for lo I see the ark wh rein I did xpose thee m child n days gon by whilst et t d babe n th ca ni f Lecrops, neath the rock roof of M rae So now will I lea thi ltar thou gh death a ait m

Ion Seize her sh i mad prunn g thu from the sh l er f th carved alta B nd h rms

Cr K ll! spa not! for I c thee w ll clea e and t this k, and all t at is wi h n t

I Is not thi monst ous? h re am I laid claim t on pecious pretext.

Cr N y na but as a friend thou by friend now found

Io I a friend of thine! and wouldst thou then ha e sla n me pri ily?

Cr Thou art my ch ld if that is what a parent h lds most dear

Io A end to thy web of falsehood! Ri ht well w ll I con ict thee

Cr My child that is m a m God grant I reach it!

Ion Is th s a k empty or hath it au ht within?

Cr Thy raiment whe ein I exposed thee lo g ago.

Io W it put a name theret bef re thou see it?

Cr Unless I describe it I offer to d e

Io Say on there is someth ng strange n this thy confidence

Cr Beh ld the robe my child h fingers wove

I n Desc be it maidens wea e many a pattern

Cr T not perfect but a first lesson as it were in wea g

Io Describe its form t ou shalt not catch me thu

Cr A G rgon figures in the centre f the warp

Io Great Zeu ! what fat is thi that dogs my steps?

Cr 'Tis frin ed w th snakes like an aegis.

I Lo! t s the ers robe how true we find the voice of God!

Cr Ah! wo en work that erst my irgin shuttle wrou ht

Ion Is there au ht beside or stays thy lucky guess ; g he e?

Cr There be serpents, too, w th jaws of gold an old world's mbol

I I that Athena s gift biddi her race grow up und th ir guar ia s

Cr Yes to e p ou ancestor Erichthon us.

I What their bject? what the use of these golden gaud ? pra tell

Cr Necklaces f r th newbo n babe to wear my hild

I n Lo! here they lie Yet would I kn the third gn

Cr About thy brow I bound an ol e wreath that da plucked f om the t ee Athena fir t made grow on he own rock If haply that s ther it hath not lost ts erdu e et but t ll i fresh, f r it came from the stock that ows t old

I M the dea est mother with wh t rapture I behold thee a on th cheeks, that sha e my j y I press m l ps!

Cr My son light that n thy m the s eye out shi est ond t sun—I kr w the god w ll pa don me —m m arm I ho d thee whom I ne er hoped to find f I thou ht thy h me was i that nether wo ld amon the hosts th Q een Persephon

I Ah dea m ther mine! w th thy rms I rest th dead now brou ht to li ht and dead no mor

Cr Hail thou b oad expanse of bright bl e ky! What word can I find t utte my jo aloud? When e comes to m su h unexpected raptu e? To what do I owe th s bliss?

Ion Th s is the last thi g that r w uld ha e occu ed to me mother that I was thy child

absent in the flesh is never in name far from me Behold this cursed woman see the web of trickery she hath woven! yet comes she cowering to Apollo s altar thinking to escape the punishment of her misdeeds

Cr I warn thee not to slay me both in my own name and in his at whose altar I am stationed

Ion What hast thou to do with Phœbus?

Cr This body I devote unto that god to keep

Ion And yet thou wert for poisoning his minister?

Cr But thou wert not Apollo s any longer but thy father s

Ion Nay I was his son that is in absence of a real father

Cr Thou wert so then now tis I not thou who am Apollo s

Ion Well thou art not guiltless now whereas I was then

Cr I sought to slay thee as an enemy to my house

Ion And yet I never invaded thy country sword in hand

Cr Thou didst and thou it was that wert casting a fire brand into the halls of Erechtheus

Ion What sort of brand or flaming fire was it?

Cr Thou didst design to seize my home against my will and make it thine

Ion What! when my father offered me a kingdom of his getting

Cr How had the sons of Æolus any share in the realm of Pallas?

Ion Arms not words he brought to champion it

Cr No mere ally could enter into an inheritance in my land

Ion And was it then from fear of consequences that thou didst try to slay me?

Cr Yes lest I should myself perish if thou wert spared

Ion Doth thy childlessness make thee envious that my father found me?

Cr And thou wilt thou rob the childless of her home?

Ion Had I then no share at all in my father s heritage?

Cr All that his sword and shield had won was thine and thine alone

Ion Quit the altar and sanctuary built for gods

Cr Go bid thy own mother wherever she is do that

Ion Shalt thou escape all punishment after trying to kill me?

Cr Not if thou choose to butcher me within this shr t

Ion What joy can it give thee to be slain amid the sacred wreaths?

Cr There is one whom I shall grieve of those who have grieved me

Ion Oh! tis passing strange how badly the deity hath enacted laws for mortal men contrary to all sound judgment for instance they should ne er ha suffered impious men to sit at their altars but should have driven them away for it was nowise right that hands unclean should touch the altars of the gods though the righteous deserved to find a refuge there from their oppressors instead of good and bad alike having recourse to the same divine protection with equal success

Enter PYTHIAN PRIESTESS

Pythian Priestess Refrain thyself my son for I the priestess of Phœbus chosen from all the maids of Delphi in accordance with the tripod s ancient rite have left that prophetic seat and am passin o er this threshold

Ion Hail to thee dear mother mine—mother though thou didst not give me birth

P P Yes so have I ever been called and the title causes me no regret

Ion Hast heard how this woman plotted my death?

P P I have thou too art wrong because of thy harshness

Ion Am I not to pay back murderers in their coin?

P P Wives ever hate the children of a former marriage

Ion As I hate stepdames for their evil treatment of me

P P Do not so but leaving as thou art the shrine and setting forth for thy country—

Ion What th n wouldst thou advise me do?

P P With clean hands seek Athens attended by good omens

Ion Surely any man hath clean hands who slays his enemies

P P Do not thou do this but take the counsel that I have for thee

Ion Say on whate er thou sayst will be prompted by thy good will

P P Dost see this basket that I carry in my arms?

Ion An ancient ark with chaplets crowned

P P Herein I found thee long ago a new born babe

Ion What sayest thou? there is novelty in the story thou art introducing

P P Yea for I was keeping these relics a secret but now I show them

Ion How camest thou to hide them on that day now lon ago when thou didst find me?

P P The god wished to have thee as his servant in his courts

Ion Does he no longer wish it? How am I to know this?

P P By declaring to thee thy sire he dismisses thee from this land

Ion Is it by his command thou keepest these relics or why?

P P Loxias put in my heart that day—

Ion What purpose? Oh! speak finish thy story

P P To preserve what I had found until the present time

Ion What weal or woe doth this import to me?

P P Herein were laid the swaddling clothes in which thou wert enwrapped

Ion These relics thou art producing may help me to find my mother

was brought to light he devised a way of deliverance fearing that thou wouldst be slain by thy mother's wiles and she by thine Now it was King Apollo's wish to keep this matter secret awhile and then in Athens to acknowledge this lady as thy mother and thyself as the child of her and Phœbus. But to end the business and discharge his oracles for the god I bid you hearken for such was my purpose in yoking my chariot steeds Do thou Creusa take this stripling and to Cecrops' land set forth and there upon the monarch's throne establish him, for from Erechtheus' stock is he sprung and therefore hath right to rule that land of mine Through Hellas shall his fame extend for his children—four branches springing from one root—shall give their names to the land and to the tribes of folk therein that dwell upon the rock I love Teleon shall be the first and next in order shall come the Hopletes and Argades and the the Ægicores called after my ægis, shall form one tribe And their children again shall in the time appointed found an island home amid the Cyclades and in the sea-coast thereby strengthening my country for they shall dwell upon the shores of two continents, of Europe and of Asia on either side the strait and in honour of Ion's name shall they be called Ionians and win them high renown. From Xuthus too and thee I see a common stock arise Dorus, whence the famous Dorian state will spring and after him Achæus in the land of Pelops he shall lord it o'er the seaboard nigh to Rhium, and his folk that bear his name, shall win the proud distinction of their leader's title Thus in I hath Apollo rightly done first did he deliver thee of thy babe without sickness, so that thy friends knew naught and after thou didst bear this child and in swaddling clothes hadst laid him he bade Hermes carry him in his arms hither and did rear him suffering him not to die Now therefore hold thy peace as to this thy child's real parentage that Xuthus may delight in his fond fancy and thou lady continue to enjoy thy blessing So fare ye well! for to you I bring tidings of a happier fate after this respite from affliction

Ion O Pallas daughter of almighty Zeus in full assurance will we accept thy words for I am convinced of my parentage from Loxias and this lady which even before was not incredible

Cr To what I say give ear My former blame of Phœbus now is turned to praise, because he now restores to me the babe whom erst he slighted Now are these portals fair unto mine eyes and this oracle of the god though before I hated them With joy now I even cling to the knocker on the door and salute the gates

At I commend thee for thy sudden change and thy fair words about the god. 'Tis ever thus Heaven's justice may tarry awhile, yet comes it at the last in no wise weakened

Cr My son let us set out for home.

At Go I will follow

Ion A guide we well may prize.

Cr Aye and one that holds our city dear

At Go sit thee down upon the throne of thy ancestors.

Ion 'Tis my heritage and I value it

Ch All hail, Apollo, son of Zeus and Latona! 'Tis only right that he, whose house is sore beset with trouble should reverence God and keep good heart for at the last the righteous find their just reward but the wicked, as their nature is, will never prosper *Exeunt* OMNES

Cr With fear I tremble still

Ion Dost thou doubt my reality?

Cr Far from me had I banished these hopes Whence O whence lady didst thou take my babe into thy arms? Who carried him to the courts of Loxias?

Ion Tis a miracle! Oh! may we for the rest of our career be happy as we were hapless heretofore

Cr In tears wert thou brought forth my child and with sorrow to thy mother didst thou leave her arms but now I breathe again as I press my lips to thy cheek in full enjoyment of happiness

Ion Thy words express our mutual feelings

Cr No more am I of son and heir bereft my house is stablished and my country hath a prince Erechtheus groweth young again no longer is the house of the earth born race plunged in gloom but lift its eyes unto the radiant sun

Ion Mother mine since my father too is here let him share the joy I have brought to thee

Cr My child my child what sayst thou? How is my sin finding me out!

Ion What meanest thou?

Cr Thou art of a different far different stock

Ion Alas for me! Am I a bastard then born in thy maiden days?

Cr Nor nuptial torch nor dance my child ushered in my wedding and thy birth

Ion O mother mother! whence do I draw my base origin?

Cr Be witness she who slew the Gorgon

Ion What meanest thou?

Cr She that on my native rocks makes the olive clad hill her seat

Ion Thy words to me are but as cunning riddles I cannot read them

Cr Hard by the rock with nightingales melodious Phœbus

Ion Why dost thou mention Phœbus?

Cr Forced on me his secret love

Ion Say on for thy story will crown me with fame and fortune

Cr And as the tenth month came round I bore a child to Phœbus in secret

Ion Oh! thy happy tidings if thy story is true

Cr And about thee as swaddling clothes I fastened this my maiden work the faulty efforts of my loom But to my breast I never held thy lips or suckled or washed thee with a mother s care but in a desert cave wert thou cast out to die for taloned kites to rend and feast upon

Ion An awful deed! O mother!

Cr Fear held me captive and I cast thy life away my child I would though loth have slain thee too

Ion Thou too wert all but slain by me most impiously

Cr O the horror of all I suffered then! O the horror of what is to follow now! To and fro from bad to good we toss though now the gale is shifting round May it remain steady! the past brought sorrows enough but now hath a fair breeze sprung up my son to waft us out of woe

Ch Let no man ever deem a thing past hoping for when he turns an eye towards what is happening now

Ion O Fortune! who ere now hast changed the lot of countless mortals first to grief and then to joy again to what a goal my life had come even to staining my hands with a mother s blood and enduring sufferings ill deserved! Ah well! may we not learn these truths daily in all that the bright sun embraces? O mother in thee have I made a happy discovery and from my point of view there is no fault to find with my birth but what remains I fain would speak to thee apart Come hither for I would say a word in thine ear and o er these matters cast the veil of silence Bethink thee mother carefully didst thou make the fatal slip that maidens will as touching secret amours and then upon the god wouldst foist the blame in thy anxiety to escape the shame of my birth asserting that Phœbus is my sire albeit the god was not the parent

Cr Nay by our queen of Victory Athena that fought by Zeus in days gone by high on his car against the earth born giants I swear no mortal is thy father my son but King Loxias himself who brought thee up

Ion How then is it he gave his own child to another father declaring that I was begotten of Xuthus?

Cr Begotten he never said but as a gift he doth bestow thee his own son on him for friend might give to friend even his own son to rule his house

Ion Mother mine this thought disturbs my breast as well it may whether the god speaks truth or gives an idle oracle

Cr Hear then my son the thought that hath occurred to me Loxias out of kindness is establishing thee in a noble family for hadst thou been called the god s son thou hadst never inherited a father s home and name How couldst thou when I strove to hide my marriage with him and would have slain thee privily? But he for thy interest is handing thee over to another father

Ion Not thus lightly do I pursue the inquiry nay I will enter Apollo s shrine and question him whether I am the child of a mortal sire or his own son (ATHENA *appears above the temple*) Ha! who is that hovering o er the incense smoking roof and showing to our gaze a heavenly face bright as the sun? Let us fly mother that we see not sights divine unless haply it is right we should

Athena Fly not! I am no foe ye seek to shun but alike in Athens and this place your kindly friend Tis I Pallas after whom your land is named that am here by Apollo sent in headlong haste for he thought not fit to appear before you twain lest his coming might provoke reproaches for the past but me he sends to proclaim to you his words how that this is thy mother and Apollo thy sire while thyself he doth bestow as seems him good not indeed on him that begat thee nay but that he may bring thee to a house of high repute For when this matter

He No wond then that thou dost hate Helen. B so who art thou Whence comest? B what name am I to cal thee?

T My name is Teucer m s e was Telamon, and Salamis is the land that nurtured me

H Then why art thou v sit these meadows b th Nile?

T A wanderer I am exile from m nati e land

He Thine must be a piteous lot who from th country dri es thee out?

T My father Telamon. Could t find nearer and a dearer?

H But why? This case is surel frau ht w th woe.

Te Th death of Aias my brother at Tro was m ruin.

H How so? surely twas not th sword that st le his lif way?

T H threw himself n his own blad a d d ed

H W s he mad? for who w th sense endowed would bring himself t this?

T Dost thou know a ht f Achilles, son f P leus?

H H came so I ha heard to woo H len once.

Te When h died he l ft his arms for his comrades t contest

H W ll if he did, what harm herein t Aias?

Te When another won these arms, to himself he put an end

H Art thou then a sufferer by woes that h in flicted?

T Yes, because I did not join him in his death.

H So thou camest si stran er to Ilium fa mous town?

Te Aye and, after helpin to sack t, myself did learn what ruin meant

H Is Troy already fired and tterl by flames consumed?

T Yea, so th t not so much as on estige of her walls is now to be seen.

H Woe is thee, poor Helen! thou art the cause of Phr gia ruin.

T And of A haeans too. Ah! tis a tale of grievous misery!

H How loo is t since the ty was sa ked?

T N h seven fruitful seasons ha come and gone

H And how much longer did e abid in Troy?

Te Many a weary month, till throu h ten full years the moon had held her course

H And did y captur that Sparta dame?

T Menelaus caught her b the hair and wa for dra ging he way

He Didst thou th self behold that unhapp one? or art thou speakin from hearsa ?

T As plain as I now see thee I then saw her

H Consider hether y were b t indul g a idle fancy sent by hea en.

T Beth k thee of som ther topic no more of her!

H Ar ou so sure this fancy was reliable?

Te With these eyes I saw her face to face if so be I see thee now

He Hath Men laus reached his home by this time with his wife

Te No he is ne ther in Argos, nor yet by the streams of Eurotas.

He Ah me! here is evil news for those to whom thou art tellin t

Te 'Tis said he disappeared with his wife.

He Did not all the Arg es make the passage together?

Te Yes b t a tempest scattered them in every direction

H In what quarter of the broad ocean?

Te The were crossin the Ægean in mid channel.

He And after that doth no man know of Menelaus arri al?

Te No, none but throu h Hellas is he reported to be dead.

He Then am I lost Is the daughter of Thestius alive?

T Dost speak of Leda? She is dead ave dead and gon

He Was t H len s shame that caused her death?

Te Aye tis said she tied the noose bout her noble neck.

He Are the sons of Tyndareus still ali e or not?

Te Dead and et ali e tis a double tory

He Which is the more cred ble report? Woe is me for my sorrows!

Te Men say that they are gods in the likeness of stars.

He That is happy news but what is the other rumour

Te That they by self nfl cted wounds ga e up the ghost because of their si ter s shame But enough of such talk! I ha e no wish to m ltipl m griefs. Th reason of m comin to this royal palace wa a wish to see that famous prophetess Theonoe Do thou the means afford, that I from her may obtain an oracle how I shall steer a favourable course t the sea girt shores of C prus fo th re Apollo hath declared my hom shall be gi en to t the name of Salamis, my island home, in honour of that father land acros the main.

H That shall th oyage itself explain sir stranger but do thou lea e these hores and fl ere th son of Proteus, th ruler of this land catch sight of thee Now is he awa with his trusty hounds track in his sa age quarry to the death for every stranger that he c tch th from th land of Hellas doth h sl His reason never ask t know my l ps are sealed for what could word of mine a ail thee?

T Lady th ord are fair Hea en grant thee a fair equital for this kindness! For thou h in form thou dost resembl H len, thy soul is not like hers, nay ry different. Perdition seize her! May she n each the streams of Eurota ! But thine be jo fo e ermore lady! *Exit* TEUCER.

H Ah me! what piteous dirge shall I stri e t utte now that I am begin my strain of bitter

HELEN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HELEN	PORTRESS *an old woman*
TEUCER	MESSENGER
CHORUS *ladies attendant on Helen*	THEONOE
	THEOCLYMENUS
MENELAUS	THE DIOSCURI

Tomb of Proteus in the island of Pharos Enter HELEN

Helen Lo! these are the fair virgin streams of Nile the river that waters Egypt s tilth fed by pure melting snow instead of rain from heaven Proteus during his lifetime was king of this land dwelling in the isle of Pharos and ruling o er Egypt and he took to wife one of the daughters of the sea Psamathe after she left the embrace of Æacus Two children she bare in this his palace a son Theoclymenus who hath passed his life in duteous service to the gods and likewise a noble daughter her mother s pride called Eido in her infancy but when she reached her youthful prime the age for wedded joys renamed Theonoe for well she knew whate er the gods design both present and to come for she had won this guerdon from her grandsire Nereus Nor is my fatherland unknown to fame e en Sparta or my sire Tyndareus for a legend tells how Zeus winged his way to my mother Leda s breast in the semblance of a bird even a swan and thus as he fled from an eagle s pursuit achieved by guile his amorous purpose if this tale be true My name is Helen and I will now recount the sorrows I have suffered To a hollow vale on Ida came three goddesses to Paris for beauty s prize contending Hera and Cypris and the virgin child of Zeus eager to secure his verdict on their loveliness Now Cypris held out my beauty—if aught so wretched deserves that name—as a bribe before the eyes of Paris saying he should marry me and so she won the day wherefore the shepherd of Ida left his steadin and came to Sparta thinking to win me for his bride But Hera indignant at not defeating the goddesses brought to naught my marriage with Paris and gave to Priam s princely son not Helen but a phantom endowed with life that sh made in my image out of the breath of heaven and Paris thought that I was his although I never was—an idle fancy! Moreover the counsels of Zeus added further troubles unto these for upon the land of Hellas and the hapless Phrygians he brought a war that he might lighten mother earth of her myriad hosts of men and to the bravest of the sons of Hellas bring renown So I was set up as a prize for all the chivalry of Hellas to test the might of Phrygia yet not I but my name alone for Hermes caught me up in the embracing air and veiled me in a cloud for Zeus was not unmindful of me and he set me down here in the house of Proteus judging him to be the most virtuous of all mankind that so I might preserve my marria e with Menelaus free from taint Here then I abide while my hapless lord has gathered an army and is setting out for the towers of Ilium to track and recover me And there by Scamander s streams hath many a life breathed out its last and all for me and I that have endured all this am accursed and seem to have embroiled all Hellas in a mighty war by proving a traitress to my husband Why then do I prolong my life? Because I heard Hermes declare that I should yet again make my home on Sparta s glorious soil with my lord—for Hermes knew I never went to Ilium—that so I might never submit to any other s wooing Now as lon as Proteus gazed upon yon glorious sun I was safe from marriage but when o er him the dark grave closed the dead man s son was eager for my hand But I from regard to my former husband am throwing myself down in suppliant wise before this tomb of Proteus praying him to guard my husband s honour that though through Hellas I bear a name dishonoured at least my body here may not incur disgrace

Enter TEUCER

Teucer Who is lord and master of this fenced palace? The house is one I may compare to the halls of Plutus with its royal bulwarks and towering buildings Ha! great gods! what sight is here? I see the counterfeit of that fell murderous dame who ruined me and all the Achæans May Heaven show its loathing for thee so much dost thou resemble Helen! Were I not standing on a foreign soil with this well aimed shaft had I worked thy death thy reward for resembling the daughter of Zeus

He Oh! why poor man whoe er thou art dost thou turn from me loathing me for those troubles Helen caused?

Te I was wrong I yielded to my anger more than I ought my reason was the hate all Hellas bears to that daughter of Zeus Pardon me lady for the words I uttered

He Who art thou? whence comest thou to visit this land?

Te One of those hapless Achæans am I lady

Ch. There is much that falsehood seems to make quite clear

H. The word of truth hath a very different sound to falsehood.

Ch. Thou art inclined to misfortune, rather than to luck.

He. Fear girds me with terrors as with a garment, and takes me in her train.

Ch. What friends hast thou within the palace?

H. All are my friends here save him who seeks to wed me.

Ch. Thy action then is clear: leave thy seat at the tomb

H. To what words or advice art thou leading up?

Ch. Go in and question the daughter of the ocean Nereid who knoweth all things, even Theonoe whether thy husband is still alive, or whether he hath left the light of day; and when thou knowest for certain, be glad or sorrowful, as fits thy fortune. But before thou hast any correct information, what shall sorrow avail thee? Nay, hearken to me: leave this tomb and seek the maiden's company that she may tell thee the truth, for from her shalt thou learn all. If thou abide here in this building, what prospect hast thou? And I will myself go in with thee and with thee inquire of the maiden's oracles; for 'tis a woman's bounden duty to share a sister's trouble.

He. Kind friends, I welcome your advice. Come in, come in, that ye may learn the result of my struggle within the palace.

Ch. Thy invitation comes to very willing ears.

H. Woe for this heavy day! Ah me! what mournful tidings shall I hear?

Ch. Dear mistress mine, be not a prophetess of sorrow, forestalling lamentation.

He. What is the fate of my poor husband? Doth he still behold the light turning towards the sungod's chariot and the stars in their courses?

Ch.

H.

Or among the dead beneath the earth, is he to death consigned?

Ch. Of the future take a brighter view whatever shall betide

H. On thee I call, and thee adjure, Eurotas green with river-reeds, to tell me if this rumour of my husband's death be true.

Ch. What boots this meaningless appeal?

H. About my neck will I fasten the deadly noose, or drive the murderous knife with self-aimed thrust deep into my throat *to sever* it, striving to cut my flesh, a sacrifice to those goddesses three and to that son of Priam, who in days gone by would wake the music of his pipe around his steading.

Ch. Oh may sorrow be averted otherwhither, and thou be blest!

H. Woe is thee, unhappy Troy! Thou through deeds not done by thee art ruined, and hast suffered direst woe; for the gift that Cypris gave to me, hath caused a sea of blood to flow, and many an eye to weep with grief on grief and tear on tear. All this hath Ilium suffered and mothers have lost their children, and virgin sisters of the slain have cut off their tresses by the swollen tide of Phrygian Scamander. And the land of Hellas hath lifted her voice of woe and broken forth in wailing, smiting on her head, and making tender cheeks to stream with gore beneath the rending nail. Ah blest maid Calisto, who long ago in Arcady didst find favour with Zeus, in the semblance of a beast four footed, how much happier was thy lot than my mother's, for thou hast changed the burden of thy grief and now with savage eye art weeping o'er thy shaggy monster-shape; aye, and hers was a happier lot, whom on a day Artemis drove from her choir, changed to a hind with horns of gold, the fair Titanian maid, daughter of Merops, because of her beauty; but my fair form hath proved the curse of Dardan Troy and doomed Achæa's sons.

Enter MENELAUS. *Exeunt* HELEN *and* CHORUS

Menelaus. Ah! Pelops, easy victor long ago o'er thy rival Œnomaus in the chariot race on Pisa's plain, would thou hadst ended thy career amongst the gods that day thou wert beguiled into making a banquet for them, or ever thou hadst begotten my father Atreus, to whom were born by Aerope his wife, Agamemnon and myself Menelaus, an illustrious pair; and herein I make no idle boast, for 'twas a mighty host, I trow, that I their leader carried o'er the sea to Troy, using no violence to make them follow me, but leading all the chivalry of Hellas by voluntary consent. And some of these must we number mid the slain, and some to their joy have 'scaped the sea, bearing to their homes again names long reckoned dead. But I, poor wretch, go wandering o'er grey Ocean's swell a weary space, long as that which saw me sack the towers of Ilium; and for all my longing to reach my country I am not counted worthy of this boon by heaven, but to Libya's desert cheerless roadsteads have I sailed, to each and all of them; and whensoe'er I draw me near my native land, the storm wind drives me back again, and never yet have favouring breezes filled my sails, to let me reach my fatherland. And now a wretched, shipwrecked mariner, my friends all lost, am I cast up upon this shore; and my ship is shattered in a thousand pieces against the rocks; and its keel was wrested from its cunning fastenings; thereon did I with difficulty escape, most unexpectedly, and Helen also, for her had I rescued from Troy and had with me. But the name of this country and its people I know not; for I blushed to mingle with the crowd to question them, anxious for very shame to hide my misfortunes which reduce me to these sorry rags. For when a man of high degree meets with adventure ill, he feels the strangeness of his fallen state more keenly than a sufferer of long standing. Dire want is wasting me; for I have neither food, nor raiment to gird myself withal; behold the fact before you to judge from—I am clad in tatters cast up from the ship; while all the robes I once did wear, glorious attire and ornaments, hath the sea

lamentation? What *Muse shall* I approach with tears or songs of death or woe? Ah me! ye Sirens Earth s virgin daughters winged maids come oh! come to aid my mourning bringing with you the Libyan flute or pipe to waft to Persephone s ear a tearful plaint the echo of my sorrow with grief for grief and mournful chant for chant with songs *of death and doom to match my lamentation* that in return she may receive from me besides my tears dirges for the departed dead beneath her gloomy roof!

Enter CHORUS

Chorus Beside the deep blue water I chanced to be hanging purple robes along the tendrils green and on the sprouting reeds to dry them in the sun god s golden blaze when lo! I heard a sound of woe a mournful wail the voice of one crying aloud in her anguish yea such a cry of woe as Naiad nymph might send ringing o er the hills while to her cry the depths of rocky grots re echo her screams at the violence of Pan

He Woe! woe! ye maids of Hellas booty of barbarian sailors! one hath come an Achæan mariner bringing fresh tears to me the news of Ilium s overthrow how that it is left to the mercy of the foeman s *flame and all for me the murderess or for my* name with sorrow fraught While for anguish at my deed of shame hath Leda sought her death by hanging and on the deep to weary wandering doomed my lord hath met his end and Castor and his brother twin glory of their native land are vanished from men s sight leaving the plains that shook to their galloping steeds and the course beside reed fringed Eurotas where those youthful athletes strove

Ch Ah misery! Alas! for thy grievous destiny! Woe for thy sad lot lady! Ah! twas a day of sorrow meted out for thee when Zeus came glancing through the sky on snowy pinions like a swan and won thy mother s heart What evil is not thine? Is there a grief in life that thou hast not endured? Thy mother is dead the two dear sons of Zeus have perished miserably and thou art severed from thy country s sight while through the towns of men a rumour runs consigning thee my honoured mistress to a barbarian s bed and mid the ocean waves thy lord hath lost his life and never never more shalt thou fill with glee thy father s halls or Athena s temple of the Brazen House

He Ah! who was that Phrygian who was he that felled that pine with sorrow fraught for Ilium and for those that came from Hellas? Hence it was that Priam s son his cursed barque did build and sped by barbarian oars sailed unto my home in quest of beauty woman s curse to win me for his bride and with him sailed the treacherous queen of Love on slaughter bent with death alike for Priam s sons and Danai too Ah me! for my hard lot! Next Hera stately bride of Zeus seated on her golden throne *sent the* son of Maia swift of foot who caught me up as I was gathering fresh rose buds in the folds of my robe that I might go to the Brazen House and bore me through the air to this loveless land making me an object of unhappy strife twixt Hellas and the race of Priam And my name is but a sound without reality beside the streams of Simois

Ch Well I know thou hast a bitter lot to bear still tis best to bear as lightly as we may the ills that life is heir to

He Good friends to what a fate am I united? Did not my mother bear me to be a monster to the world? For no woman Hellene or barbarian gives birth to babes in eggs inclosed as they say Leda bare me to Zeus My life and all I do is one miracle partly owing to Hera and partly is my beauty to blame Would God I could rub my beauty out like *a picture and assume hereafter in its stead a form* less comely and oh! that Hellas had forgotten the evil fate that now I bear and were now remembering my career of honour as surely as they do my deeds of shame Now if a man doth turn his eyes to a single phase of fortune and meets ill usage at heaven s hands tis hard no doubt but still it can be borne but I in countless troubles am involved First although I never sinned my good name is gone And this is a grief beyond the reality if a man incurs blame for sins that are not his Next have *the gods removed me from my native land to dwell* with men of barbarous habits and reft of every friend I am become a slave though free by birth for amongst barbarians all are slaves but one And the last anchor that held my fortunes the hope that my husband would return one day and rid me of my woes is now no more lost since the day he died My mother too is dead and I am called her murderess unjustly it is true but still that injustice is mine to bear and she that was the glory of my house my darling child is growing old and grey *unwedded still and those twin brethren called* the sons of Zeus are now no more But tis fortune not my own doing that hath crushed me with sorrow and slain me And this is the last evil of all if ever I come to my native land they will shut me up in prison thinking me that Helen of Ilium in quest of whom Menelaus came thither Were my husband still alive we might have recognized each other by having recourse to tokens which ourselves alone would know But now this may not be nor is there any chance of his escape Why then do I prolong *my life? What fortune have I still in store?* Shall I choose marriage as an alternative of evils and dwell with a barbarian lord seated at his sumptuous board? No! when a husband she loathes is mated with a woman even life is loathly to her Best for her to die but how shall I die a noble death? The dangling noose is an uncomely end even slaves consider it a disgrace to stab oneself hath something fair and noble in it tis a small thing that moment of ridding the flesh of life Yes it must be I am plunged so deep in misery for that beauty which to other women is a boon to me hath been a very bane

Ch Helen never believe that the stranger whoe er he was that came has spoken naught but truth

He Yet he said so clearly that my lord was dead

wearing out his life, nor yet hath reached the haven of his country, wandering dragging out a piteous existence reft of every friend, setting foot in every corner of the world, as he voyageth home from Troy.

Enter HELEN.

H. Lo! once again I seek the shelter of this tomb, with Theonoe's sweet tidings in my ears; she that knoweth all things of a truth; for she saith my lord is yet alive and in the light of day, albeit he is roaming to and fro after many a weary voyage, and hither shall he come whenso he reach the limit of his toils, no novice in the wanderer's life. But one thing did she leave unsaid. Is he to escape when he hath come? And I refrained from asking that question clearly, so glad was I when she told me he was safe. For she said that he was somewhere nigh this shore, cast up by shipwreck with a handful of friends. Ah! when shall I see thee come? How welcome will thy advent be! Ha! who is this? Am I being snared by some trick of Proteus' impious son? Oh! let me, like a courser at its speed, or a votary of Bacchus, approach the tomb! for there is something wild about this fellow's looks, who is eager to o'ertake me.

Men. Ho there! thou that with fearful effort seekest to reach the basement of the tomb and the pillars of burnt sacrifice, stay thee. Wherefore art fleeing? Ah! with what speechless amaze the sight of thee affects me!

H. O friends! I am being ill-treated. This fellow is keeping me from the tomb, and is eager to take and give me to his master, whose wooing I was seeking to avoid.

Men. No robber I, or minister of evil.

H. At any rate the garb wherein thou art clad is unseemly.

Men. Stay thy hasty flight, put fear aside.

H. I do so, now that I have reached this spot.

Men. Who art thou? whom do I behold in thee, lady?

H. Nay, who art thou? The self-same reason prompts us both.

Men. I never saw a closer resemblance.

H. Great God! Yea, for to recognize our friends is of God.

Men. Art thou from Hellas, or a native of this land?

H. From Hellas; but I would learn thy story too.

Men. Lady, in thee I see a wondrous likeness to Helen.

H. And I in thee to Menelaus; I know not what to say.

Men. Well, thou hast recognized aright a man of many sorrows.

H. Hail! to thy wife's arms restored at last!

Men. Wife indeed! Lay not a finger on my robe.

H. The wife that Tyndareus, my father, gave thee.

Men. O Hecate, giver of light, send thy visions favourably!

H. In me thou beholdest no spectre of the night, attendant on the queen of phantoms.

Men. Nor yet am I in my single person the husband of two wives.

He. What other woman calls thee lord?

Men. The inmate of yonder cave, whom I from Troy convey.

H. Thou hast none other wife but me.

Men. Can it be my mind is wandering, my sight failing?

H. Dost not believe thou seest in me thy wife?

Men. Thy form resembles her, but the real truth robs me of this belief.

H. Observe me well; what need hast thou of clearer proof?

Men. Thou art like her; that will I never deny.

H. Who then shall teach thee, unless it be thine own eyes?

Men. Herein is my dilemma; I have another wife.

H. To Troy I never went; that was a phantom.

Men. Pray, who fashions living bodies?

H. The air, whence thou hast a wife of heaven's workmanship.

Men. What god's handiwork? Strange is the tale thou tellest.

H. Hera made it as a substitute, to keep me from Paris.

Men. How then couldst thou have been here, and in Troy, at the same time?

H. The name may be in many a place at once, though not the body.

Men. Unhand me! the sorrows I brought with me suffice.

He. What! wilt leave me, and take that phantom bride away?

Men. For thy likeness unto Helen, fare thee well.

H. Ruined! in thee I found my lord only to lose thee.

Men. The greatness of my troubles at Troy convinces me; thou dost not.

H. Ah, woe is me! who was ever more unfortunate than I? Those whom I love best are leaving me, nor shall I ever reach Hellas, my own dear native land.

Messenger (*Entering hurriedly*.) At last I find thee, Menelaus, after an anxious search, not till I have wandered through the length and breadth of this foreign strand; I am sent by thy comrades, whom thou didst leave behind.

Men. What news? surely you are not being spoiled by the barbarians?

Mes. A miracle hath happened; my words are too weak for the reality.

Men. Speak; for judging by this haste, thou hast stirring news.

Mes. My message is: thy countless toils have all been toiled in vain.

Men. That is an old tale of woe to mourn! come, thy news?

Mes. Thy wife hath disappeared, soaring away into the embracing air; in heaven she now is hidden, and as she left the hollowed cave where we were guarding her, she hailed us thus, "Ye hapless Phrygians, and all Achaea's race! for me upon Scamander's strand by Hera's arts ye died from day to day, in the false belief that Helen was in the hands of Paris.

swallowed and in a cavern s deep reces s have I hidden my wife the cause of all my trouble and have come hither after straitly charging the survivors of my friends to watch her Alone am I come seeking for those there left some help if haply I may find it after careful search So when I saw this palace girt with towering walls and stately gates of some prosperous lord I drew nigh for I have hope to obtain somewhat for my sailors from this wealthy house whereas from houses which have no store the inmates for all their goodwill could furnish naught Ho! there who keeps the gate and will come forth to bear my tale of woe into the house?

Enter PORTRESS

Portress Who stands before the door? Begone from th house! stand not at the court yard gate annoying my masters! otherwise shalt thou die for thou art a Hellene born and with them have we no dealings

Men Mother herein sayest thou rightly on all points Tis well I will obey but moderate thy words

Po Away! stranger my orders are to admit no Hellene to this palace

Men Ha! do not seek to push me hence or thrust me away by violence

Po Thou dost not heed my words and therefore hast thyself to blame

Men Carry my message to thy master in the palace

Po Some one would rue it methinks were I to take thy message

Men I come as a shipwrecked man and a stranger whom heaven protects

Po Well get thee to some other house than this

Men Nay but I will pass into the house so listen to me

Po Let me tell thee thou art unwelcome and soon wilt be forcibly ejected

Men Ah me! where are now those famous troops of mine?

Po Elsewhere maybe thou wert a mighty man thou art not here

Men O fortune! I have not deserved such contumely

Po Why are thy eyes with tear-drops wet? Why so sad?

Men Tis the contrast with my fortunes erst so blest

Po Hence! then and give thy friends those tears

Men What land is this? whose is the palace?

Po Proteus lives here It is the land of Egypt

Men Egypt? Woe is me! to think that hither I have sailed!

Po Pray what fault hast thou to find with the race of Nile?

Men Twas no fault I found my own disasters I lament

Po There be plenty in evil case thou art not the only one

Men Is the king of whom thou speakest here within?

Po There is his tomb his son rules in his s ad

Men And where may he be? abroad or in the house?

Po He is not within To Hellas is he a bitter foe

Men His reason pray for this enmity? the results whereof I have experienced

Po Beneath this roof dwells the daughter of Zeus, Helen

Men What mean st thou? what is it thou hast said? Repeat I pray thy words

Po The daughter of Tyndareus is here who erst in Sparta dwelt

Men Whence came she? What means this business?

Po She came from Lacedæmon hither

Men When? Surely I have never been robbed of my wife from the cave!

Po Before the Achæans went to Troy sir stranger But get thee hence for somewhat hath chanced within whereat the whole palace is in an uproar Thou comest most unseasonably and if my master catch thee death will be thy stranger s gift This say I because to Hellas I am well disposed albeit I gave thee harsh answers for fear of my master

Exit PORTRESS

Men What can I think or say? For after my previous troubles this is a fresh piece of ill luck I hear if indeed after recovering my wife from Troy and bringing her hither and putting her for safety in the cave I am then to find another woman living here with the same name as my wife She called her the begotten child of Zeus Can there be a man that hath the name of Zeus by the banks of Nile? The Zeus of heaven is only one at any rate Where is there a Sparta in the world save where Eurotas glides between his reedy banks? The name of Tyndareus is the name of one alone Is there any land of the same name as Lacedæmon or Troy? I know not what to say for naturally there are many in the wide world that have the same names cities and women too there is nothing then to marvel at Nor yet again will I fly from the alarm a servant raises for there is none so cruel of heart as to refuse me food when once he hears my name All have heard of Ilium s burning and I that set it ablaze am famous now throughout the world I Menelaus I therefore wait the master of this house There are two issues I must watch if he prove somewhat stern of heart I will to my wreck and there conceal myself but if he show any sign of pity I will ask for help in this my present strait This is the crowning woe in all my misery to beg the means of life from other princes prince though I be myself still needs must I Yea this is no saying of mine but a word of wisdom Naught in might exceed th dread necessity

Enter CHORUS

Ch I have heard the voice of the maiden inspired Clear is the answer she hath vouchsafed within yon palace declaring that Menelaus is not yet dead and buried passed to the land of shades where darkness takes the place of light but on the stormy main is

wearing out his life, nor yet hath reached the ha en of his country wanderer draggi g out a piteous exi tence eft of e ers fri nd settin, foot in every corner of the world as he v va eth h m from Troy

Er er HELEN

H Lo! once again I seek the sh lter of this tomb th Theonoe s sweet tidings in my ears she that knoweth all things of a truth f r she sa th my lo d is et aliv and in th li ht of day albeit he s roam in t and fr after many a weary ovage nd hither shall h com whenso he reach the limit of hi t ils, no novice in the wanderer s lif But one th ng did sh lea e unsaid I be to escape when he hath com ? And I frained from skin that quest on clearl so glad was I when she t ld m he was safe. For she said that h was somewhere nigh this sho cast up by sh pw eck w th a handful of friends. Ah! when hall I see thee come? Ho welcome will thy ad ent be! Ha! who is this? Am I being sna ed by some trick of Proteus impious son? Oh! I t me like a courser at its speed r otary of Bacchus, ap proa h the tomb! for there is something wild about this fellow s looks, who is eager to o ertake m

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But I since I have stayed my appointed time and kept the laws of fate will now depart unto the sky that gave me birth but the unhappy daughter of Tyndareus through no fault of hers hath borne an evil name without reason (*Catching sight of* HELEN) Daughter of Leda hail to thee so thou art here after all! I was just announcing thy departure to the hidden starry realms little knowing that thou couldst fly at will I will not a second time let thee flout us thus for thou didst cause thy lord and his comrades trouble all for naught in Ilium

Men This is even what she said her words are proved true O longed for day how hath it restored thee to my arms!

He O Menelaus dearest husband the time of sorrow has been long but joy is now ours at last Ah friends what joy for me to hold my husband in a fond embrace after many a weary cycle of yon blazing lamp of day!

Men What joy for me to hold my wife! but with all the questions I have to ask about the interval I know not with which to begin now

He O rapture! the very hair upon my head starts up for joy! my tears run down! Around thy neck I fling my arms dear husband to hug my joy to me

Men O happy happy sight! I have no fault to find my wife the daughter of Zeus and Leda is mine again she whom her brothers on their snow white steeds whilst torches blazed made my happy bride but gods removed her from my home Now is the deity guiding us to a new destiny happier than of yore

He Evil into good transformed hath brought us twain together at last dear husband but late though it be God grant me joy of my good luck!

Men God grant thee joy! I join thee in the self same prayer for of us twain one cannot suffer without the other

He No more my friends I mourn the past no longer now I grieve My own dear husband is restored to me whose coming from Troy I have waited many a long year

Men I to thee and thou to me And after these long long years I have at last discovered the fraud of the goddess But these tears in gladness shed are tears of thankfulness rather than of sorrow

He What can I say? What mortal heart could e er have had such hope? To my bosom I press thee little as I ever thought to

Men And I to mine press thee who all men thought hadst gone to Ida s town and the hapless towers of Ilium

He Ah me! ah me! that is a bitter subject to begin on

Men Tell me I adjure thee how wert thou from my home conveyed?

He Alas! alas! tis a bitter tale thou askest to hear

Men Speak for I must hear it all that comes is Heaven s gift

He I loathe the story I am now to introduce

Men Tell it for all that Tis sweet to hear of trouble past

He I ne er set forth to be the young barbarian s bride with oars and wings of lawless love to speed me on my way

Men What deity or fate tore thee from thy country then?

He Ah my lord! twas Hermes the son of Zeus, that brought and placed me by the banks of Nile.

Men A miracle! Who sent thee thither? O monstrous story!

He I wept and still my eyes are wet with tears. Twas the wife of Zeus that ruined me

Men Hera? wherefore should she afflict us twain?

He Woe is me for my awful fate! Woe for those founts and baths where the goddesses made brighter still that beauty which evoked the fatal verdict!

Men Why did Hera visit thee with evil regarding this verdict?

He To wrest the promise of Cypris—

Men How now? Say on

He From Paris to whom that goddess pledged me

Men Woe for thee!

He And so she brought me hither to Egypt to my sorrow

Men Then she gave him a phantom in thy stead as thou tellest me?

He And then began those woes of thine ah mother! woe is me!

Men What meanest thou?

He My mother is no more my shameful marriage made her fix the noose about her neck

Men Ah me! is our daughter Hermione yet alive?

He Still unwed and childless still she mourns my fatal marriage

Men O Paris who didst utterly o erthrow my home here was thy ruin too and theirs those countless mail clad Danai

He From my country city and from thee heaven cast me forth unhappy and accursed because I left —and yet not I—home and husband for a union of foul shame

Ch If haply ye find happiness in the future it will suffice when to the past ye look

Mes Menelaus grant me too a portion of that joy which though mine own eyes see I scarcely comprehend

Men Come then old friend and share with us our talk

Mes Was it not then in her power to decide all the trouble in Troy?

Men It was not I was tricked by the gods into taking to my arms a misty phantom form to my sorrow

Mes How so? was it then for this we vainly toiled?

Men 'Twas Hera s handiwork and the jealousy of three goddesses

Mes Is this real woman then thy wife?

Men This is she trust my word for that

Mes Daughter how changeful and inscrutable is the nature of God! With some good end doth he vary men s fortune—now up now down one suffers another who ne er knew suffering is in his turn

to awful ruin brought ha ing no assuranc in his lot from day to day Thou and thy husband have had your share of trouble—thou in what the wo ld has said he in battle s heat For all th stri n that he strove he got him naught wh le now w thout a effort made every blessing fortune boasts is his. And thou in spite of all hast brought no shame upon thy a ed sire o those twin sons of Zeus, nor art thou guilty of those rumoured crimes N w again do I recall thy wedding rites, rem mbering th blaz ing torch I bor beside thee n a four horsed chariot at full gallop whil th u w th this thy lord a new made bride we t dr ng fo th from thy happy home A sorry servant he whoso regardeth not his mast r s interest sympathizi g with his sorrows and his joys Sla e though I was born yet may I be numbered amongst honest servants fo in heart thou h not in name I am free For this is better far than in my sin l person to suffer these two e ils, t feel my heart corrupt and as the sla e of others to be at my neighbou s beck and call

Men Come old fr end oft hast thou stood side by side with m and taken thy full share of toil so w be pa tner n my happiness. Go t ll my c m rades, whom I l ft behind the state of matters he s thou hast found them and the issue of my for tunes and bid th m wait upon the beach and abide th result of th strug le which I trow a aits m and if mayhap we find a way *to take this lady* from the land by stealth tell them to k ep good watch that we may share the luck and escape if possible from the barbarian s clutch

M It shall be done O king Now I see how w rthless r th seers tricks, how full of falsehood nor is there after all a ght tru tworthy in the blaze of sa rifice r in the cry f feathe ed f wls *its folly* the r t on that bird can help mankind Cal chas ne r by wo d r sign showed the host the truth when h saw his frie ds d in o behalf of a pha t m nor t did H lenus but the city was stormed ain Perhaps thou w lt sa *twas not* hea n s will that th y should d so Then why do e emplo these *prophets*? Bett r w re it to sacr fice t th gods, nd crave a blessin lea ing propl ecy lon f r th was but devised as a ba t *to catch* a li lihood nd o ma gr ws rich by d inat on f b is idl N l sound judgm nt and d sc rnment the best I seers. *Exit* ME E GER

Ch My views about seers co cide xactly with thi old ma s wl oso hath the gods pon his side ill ha th best see in h house

H Good! so far all s w ll B t how camest thou poo h b nd safe from Troy? though t o pa to know y t f iend feel a longing to learn all that th friend ha e uff ed

Men That on ho t se tence of th ne cont ns host I quest ons Wh should I tell thee f our losses th Egean or of th beaco N uplius lighted on Eubœa o f my isit *to Crete* and the cities f Lib a or f the peak f Pe seus? For I should never satisfy thee w th the tal and by tellin thee should add t my own pai though I suffered enough at the time and so would my grief be doubled

He Th answer shows more w sdom than my quest on Omit th rest and tell me only this how lon wert thou a weary wanderer o er the wide sea s face?

Men Se en long years did I see come and go, besides those ten in Troy

H Alas, poor sufferer! twas a weary while And thou hast thence escaped only to bleed here

Men Ho so? what wilt thou tell? Ah wife thou ha t ruined me

He Thou w lt be slain by him whose house this is.

Men What have I done to mer t such a fate?

He Thou ha t arri ed unexpectedly to thwart my marria e

Men What! is some man bent on wedding my wife?

He Aye and on heaping those insults on me wh ch I ha e h the to endured

Men I he some pri ate potentate or a ruler of this land?

He The son of Proteu king of the country

Men This was that da k sayin I heard the serv ant tell

He At which of the barbarian s gates wert thou stand n ?

Men Here whence like a beggar I was like to be driven

He Surely thou wert not begg n ctuals? Ah woe is me!

Men That was what I was doing though I had not the name f b ggar

H Of *course* thou knowest, then all about my marria

Men I do But whether thou hast escaped thy lo r I know n t.

He Be ell assu ed I ha kept my body chaste

Men How wilt thou con ince me of this? If true thy word are sweet

He Dost see the wretched tat on I have kept at this tomb?

Men I see alas! a bed of straw but what hast thou to do w th it?

He There I rave escape from this marriage as a suppliant.

Men For want of an altar or beca se it is the barbarian way?

He This was as good a protection to me as the gods temples.

Men M y I not then even bear thee homeward on my ship?

H The sword far sooner than thy wife s em brace is waiting thee

Men So should I be of all men the most m serable.

H Put shame aside and fly from this land

Men Lea g th e beh nd? twas for thy sak I sacked Troy

He B tter so, than that our union should cause thy death

Men Oh! these are coward words, unworthy of those d ys at Troy!

He Thou canst not slay the prince thy possible intention

Men Hath he then a body which steel cannot wound?

He Thou shalt hear But to attempt impossibilities is no mark of wisdom

Men Am I to let them bind my hands and say nothing?

He Thou art in a dilemma some scheme must be devised

Men I had liefer die in action than sitting still

He There is one hope and only one of our safety

Men Will gold or daring deeds or winning words procure it?

He We are safe if the prince learn not of thy coming

Men Will any one tell him it is I? He certainly will not know who I am

He He hath within his palace an ally equal to the gods

Men Some voice divine within the secret chambers of his house?

He No his sister Theonoe men call her

Men Her name hath a prophetic sound tell me what she doth

He She knoweth everything and she will tell her brother thou art come

Men Then must we die for I cannot escape her ken

He Perchance we might by suppliant prayers win her over

Men To what end? To what vain hope art thou leading me?

He That she should not tell her brother thou art here

Men Suppose we persuade her can we get away?

He Easily if she connive thereat without her knowledge no

Men Be that thy task women deal best with women

He I will not fail be sure to clasp her knees

Men Come then only suppose she reject our proposals?

He Thou wilt be slain and I alas! wedded by force

Men Thou wilt betray me that force of thine is all an excuse

He Nay by thy life I swear a sacred oath

Men What meanest thou? dost swear to die and never to another husband yield?

He Yes by the self same sword I will fall by thy side

Men On these conditions touch my right hand

He I do so swearing I will quit the light of day if thou art slain

Men I too will end my life if I lose thee

He How shall we die so as to insure our reputation for this?

Men I will slay thee and then myself upon the summit of the tomb But first will I in doughty fight contest another s claim to thee and let who will draw nigh! for I will not sully the lustre of my Trojan fame nor will I on my return to Hellas incur a storm of taunts, as one who robbed Thetis of Achilles saw Aias son of Telamon fall a weltering corpse and the son of Neleus of his child bereft shall I then flinch myself from death for my own wife? No no! For if the gods are wise o er a brave man by his foes laid low they lightly sprinkle the earth that is his tomb while cowards they cast forth on barren rocky soil

Ch Grant heaven that the race of Tantalus may at last be blest and pass from sorrow unto joy!

He Ah woe is me! Yea all my lot is woe O Menelaus we are utterly undone! Behold! from forth the house comes Theonoe the prophetess The palace echoes as the bolts are unfastened fly! yet what use to fly? For whether absent or present she knows of thy arrival here Ah me! how lost am I! Saved from Troy and from a barbarian land thou hast come only to fall a prey to barbarian swords

Enter THEONOE *with handmaids*

Theonoe Lead on bearing before me blazing brands and as sacred rites ordain purge with incense every cranny of the air that I may breathe heaven s breath free from taint meanwhile do thou in case the tread of unclean feet have soiled the path wave the cleansing flame above it and brandish the torch in front that I may pass upon my way And when to heaven ye have paid the customs I exact bear back into the house the brand from off the hearth What of my prophecy Helen? how stands it now? Thou hast seen thy husband Menelaus arrive without disguise reft of his ships and of thy counterfeit Ah hapless man! what troubles hast thou escaped and art come hither and yet knowest not whether thou art to return or to abide here for there is strife in heaven and Zeus this very day will sit in solemn conclave on thee Hera who erst was thy bitter foe is now grown kind and is willing to bring thee and thy wife safe home that Hellas may learn that the marriage of Paris was all a sham assigned to him by Cypris but Cypris fain would mar thy homeward course that she may not be convicted or proved to have bought the palm of beauty at the price of Helen in a futile marriage Now the decision rests with me whether to ruin thee as Cypris wishes by telling my brother of thy presence here or to save thy life by taking Hera s side keeping my brother in the dark for his orders are that I should tell him whensoe er thou shouldst reach these shores Ho! one of you go show my brother this man is here that I may secure my position

He Maiden at thy knees I fall a suppliant and seat myself in this sad posture on behalf of myself and him whom I am in danger of seeing slain after I have so hardly found him Oh! tell not thy brother that my husband is returned to these loving arms save us I beseech thee never for thy brother s sake sacrifice thy character for uprightness by evil and unjust means bidding for his favour For the deity hates violence and biddeth all men get lawful gains without plundering others Wealth unjustly gotten

though it bring some power, is to be eschewed. The breath of heaven and the earth are man's common heritage wherein to store his home without taking the goods of others, or wresting them away by force. Me did Hermes at a critical time, to my sorrow, entrust to thy father's safe keeping for this my lord who now is here and wishes to reclaim me. But how can he recover me if he be slain? How could thy sire restore the living to the dead? Oh! consider ere that the will of heaven and thy father's too; would the deity or would thy dead sire restore their neighbour's goods, or would they forbear? restore them, I feel sure. It is not, therefore, right that thou shouldst attach more importance to thy wanton brother than to thy righteous father. Yet if thou, prophetess as thou art and believer in divine providence, shalt pervert the just intention of thy father and gratify thy unrighteous brother, 'tis shameful thou shouldst have full knowledge of the heavenly will, both what is and what is not, and yet be ignorant of justice. Oh! save my wretched life from the troubles which beset it, granting this as an accession to our good fortune; for every human soul loathes Helen, seeing that there is gone a rumour throughout Hellas that I was false unto my lord and took up my abode in Phrygia's sumptuous halls. Now if I come to Hellas, and set foot once more in Sparta, they will hear and see how they were ruined by the wiles of goddesses, while I was no traitress to my friends after all; and so will they restore to me my virtuous name again, and I shall give my daughter in marriage, whom no man now will wed; and leaving this vagrant life in Egypt, shall enjoy the treasures in my home. Had Menelaus met his doom at some funeral pyre,[1] with tears should I be cherishing his memory in a far-off land; but must I lose him now when he is alive and safe? Ah! maiden, I beseech thee, say not so; grant me this boon, I pray, and reflect thy father's justice; for this is the fairest ornament of children, when the child of virtuous sire resembles its parents in character.

Ch. Piteous thy pleading, and a piteous object thou! But I fain would hear what Menelaus will say to save his life.

Men. I will not deign to throw myself at thy knees, or wet mine eyes with tears; for were I to play the coward, I should most foully blur my Trojan fame. And yet men say it shows a noble soul to let a tear-drop fall in misfortune. But that will not be the honourable course that I will choose in preference to bravery, if what I shall say is honourable. Art thou disposed to save a stranger seeking justly to recover his wife, why then restore her and save us to boot; if not, this will not be the first by many a time that I have suffered, though thou wilt get an evil name. All that I deem worthy of me and honest, all that will touch thy heart most nearly, I will utter at the tomb of thy sire with regret for his loss. Old king beneath this tomb of stone reposing, pay back thy trust! I ask of thee my wife whom Zeus sent hither unto thee to keep for me. I know thou canst never restore her to me thyself, for thou art dead; but this thy daughter will never allow her father once so glorious, whom I invoke in his grave, to bear a tarnished name; for the decision rests with her now. Thee too, great god of death, I call to my assistance, who hast received full many a corpse slain by me for Helen, and art keeping thy wage; either restore those dead now to life again, or compel the daughter to show herself a worthy equal of her virtuous sire, and give me back my wife. But if ye will rob me of her, I will tell you that which she omitted in her speech. Know then, maiden, I by an oath am bound first to meet thy brother sword to sword, when he or I must die; there is no alternative. But if he refuse to meet me fairly front to front, and seek by famine to chase away us suppliants twain at this tomb, I am resolved to slay Helen, and then to plunge this two-edged sword through my own heart, upon the top of the sepulchre, that our streaming blood may trickle down the tomb; and our two corpses will be lying side by side upon this polished slab, a source of deathless grief to thee, and to thy sire reproach. Never shall thy brother wed Helen, nor shall any other; I will bear her hence myself, if not to my house, at any rate to death. And why this stern resolve? Were I to resort to women's ways and weep, I should be a pitiful creature, not a man of action. Slay me, if it seem thee good; I will not die ingloriously; but better yield to what I say, that thou mayst act with justice, and I recover my wife.

Ch. On thee, maiden, it rests to judge between these arguments. Decide in such a way as to please one and all.

Theon. My nature and my inclination lean towards piety; myself, too, I respect, and I will never sully my father's fair name, or gratify my brother at the cost of bringing myself into open discredit. For justice hath her temple firmly founded in my nature, and since I have this heritage from Nereus I will strive to save Menelaus; wherefore, seeing it is Hera's will to stand thy friend, I will give my vote with her. May Cypris be favourable to me! though in me she hath no part, and I will try to remain a maid alway. As for thy reproaches against my father at this tomb, lo! I have the same words to utter; I should be wronging thee, did I not restore thy wife; for my sire, were he living, would have given her back into thy keeping, and thee to her. Yea, for there is recompense for these things as well amongst the dead as amongst all those who breathe the breath of life. The soul indeed of the dead lives no more, yet hath it a consciousness that lasts for ever, eternal as the ether into which it takes the final plunge. Briefly then to end the matter, I will observe strict silence on all that ye prayed I should, and never with my counsel will I aid my brother's wanton will. For I am doing him good service, though he little thinks it, if I turn him from his godless life to holiness. Wherefore devise yourselves some way of

[1]Slain as a prisoner of war to grace some hero's funeral obsequies.

escape my lips are sealed I will not cross your path First with the goddesses begin and of the one—and that one Cypris—crave permission to return unto thy country and of Hera that her goodwill may abide in the same quarter even her scheme to save thee and thy husband And thou my own dead sire shalt never in so far as rests with me lose thy holy name to rank with evil doers *Exit* THEONOE

Ch No man ever prospered by unjust practices but in a righteous cause there is hope of safety

He Menelaus on the maiden s side are we quite safe Thou must from that point start and by contributing thy advice devise with me a scheme to save ourselves

Men Hearken then thou hast been a long while in the palace and art intimate with the king s attendants

He What dost thou mean thereby? for thou art suggesting hopes as if resolved on some plan for our mutual help

Men Couldst thou persuade one of those who have charge of cars and steeds to furnish us with a chariot?

He I might but what escape is there for us who know nothing of the country and the barbarian s kingdom?

Men True a dilemma Well supposing I conceal myself in the palace and slay the king with this two edged sword?

He His sister would never refrain from telling her brother that thou wert meditating his death

Men We have not so much as a ship to make our escape in for the sea hath swallowed the one we had

He Hear me if haply even a woman can utter words of wisdom Dost thou consent to be dead in word though not really so?

Men Tis a bad omen still if by saying so I shall gain aught I am ready to be dead in word though not in deed

He I too will mourn thee with hair cut short and dirges as is women s way before this impious wretch

Men What saving remedy doth this afford us twain? There is a flavour of deception in thy scheme

He I will beg the king of this country leave to bury thee in a cenotaph as if thou hadst really died at sea

Men Suppose he grant it how e en then are we to escape without a ship after having committed me to my empty tomb?

He I will bid him give me a vessel from which to let drop into the sea s embrace thy funeral offerings

Men A clever plan in truth save in one particular suppose he bid thee rear the tomb upon the strand thy pretext comes to naught

He But I shall say it is not the custom in Hellas to bury those who die at sea upon the shore

Men Thou removest this obstacle too I then will sail with thee and help stow the funeral garniture in the same ship

He Above all it is necessary that thou and all thy sailors who escaped from the wreck should be at hand

Men Be sure if once I find a ship at her moorings, they shall be there man for man each with his sword

He Thou must direct everything only let there be winds to waft our sails and a good ship to speed before them!

Men So shall it be for the deities will cause my troubles to cease But from whom wilt thou say thou hadst tidings of my death?

He From thee declare thyself the one and only survivor telling how thou wert sailing with the son of Atreus and didst see him perish

Men Of a truth the garments I have thrown about me will bear out my tale that they were rags collected from the wreckage

He They come in most opportunely but they were near being lost just at the wrong time Maybe that misfortune will turn to fortune

Men Am I to enter the palace with thee or are we to sit here at the tomb quietly?

He Abide here for if the king attempts to do thee any mischief this tomb and thy good sword will protect thee But I will go within and cut off my hair and exchange my white robe for sable weeds and rend my cheek with this hand s blood thirsty nail For tis a mighty struggle and I see two possible issues either I must die if detected in my plot or else to my country shall I come and save thy soul alive O Hera! awful queen who sharest the couch of Zeus grant some respite from their toil to two unhappy wretches to thee I pray tossing my arms upward to heaven where thou hast thy home in the star spangled firmament Thou too that didst win the prize of beauty at the price of my marriage O Cypris! daughter of Dione destroy me not utterly Thou hast injured me enough aforetime delivering up my name though not my person to live amongst barbarians. Oh! suffer me to die if death is thy desire in my native land Why art thou so insatiate in mischief employing every art of love of fraud and guileful schemes and spells that bring bloodshed on families? Wert thou but moderate only that!—in all else thou art by nature man s most welcome deity and I have reason to say so *Exit* HELEN

Ch Thee let me invoke tearful Philomel lurking neath the leafy covert in thy place of song most tuneful of all feathered songsters oh! come to aid me in my dirge trilling through thy tawny throat as I sing the piteous woes of Helen and the tearful fate of Trojan dames made subject to Achæa s spear on the day that there came to their plains one who sped with foreign oar across the dashing billows, bringing to Priam s race from Lacedæmon thee his hapless bride O Helen—even Paris luckless bridegroom by the guidance of Aphrodite And many an Achæan hath breathed his last amid the spearmen s thrusts and hurtling hail of stones and gone to his sad end for these their wives cut off their hair in sorrow and their houses are left without a bride and one of the Achæans that had but a single ship

ed [illegible] a baner beacon on sea-girt Eubœa, and drove full many of them, wrecked them on the rocks of Caphareus and the shores that front the Ægean main, by the treacherous gleam he kindled when thou, O Menelaus, from the very day of thy start, didst drift to harbourless hills, far from thy country before the breath of the storm, bearing on thy ship a prize that was no prize, but a phantom made by Hera out of cloud for the Danai to struggle over. What mortal claims, by searching to the utmost limit, to have found out the nature of God, or of his opposite, or of that which comes between, seeing as he doth this world of man tossed to and fro by waves of contradiction and strange vicissitudes? Thou, Helen, art the daughter of Zeus; for thy sire was the bird that nestled in Leda's bosom; and yet for all that art thou become a byword for wickedness, through the length and breadth of Hellas, as faithless, treacherous wife and godless woman; nor can I tell what certainty is, whatever it may pass for among men. That which gods pronounce have I found true. O fools! all ye who try to win the meed of valour through war and serried ranks of chivalry, seeking thus to still this mortal coil, in senselessness; for if bloody contest is to decide, there will never be any lack of strife in the towns of men; the maidens of the land of Priam left their bridal bowers, though arbitration might have put to rights thy quarrel with them, O Helen. And now Troy's sons are in Hades' keeping in the world below, and fire hath darted on her walls, as darts the flame of Zeus, and thou art bringing woe on woe to hapless sufferers in their misery.

Enter THEOCLYMENUS.

Theoclymenus. All hail, my father's tomb! I buried thee, Proteus, at the place where men pass out, that I might often greet thee; and so, ever as I go out and in, I, thy son Theoclymenus, call on thee, father. Ho! servants, to the palace take my hounds and hunting nets. How often have I blamed myself for never punishing those miscreants with death! I have just heard that a son of Hellas has come openly to my land, escaping the notice of the guard, a spy maybe or a would-be thief of Helen; death shall be his lot if only I can catch him. Ha! I find all my plans apparently frustrated; the daughter of Tyndareus has deserted her seat at the tomb and sailed away from my shores. Ho! there, undo the bars, loose the horses from their stalls, bring forth my chariot, servants, that the wife, on whom my heart is set, may not get away from these shores unseen, for want of any trouble I can take. (*Enter* HELEN.) Yet stay; for I see the object of my pursuit is still in the palace, and has not fled. How now, lady, why hast thou arrayed thee in sable weeds instead of white raiment and from thy fair head hast shorn thy tresses with the steel, bedewing thy cheeks the while with tears but lately shed? Is it in response to visions of the night that thou art mourning, or because thou hast heard some warning voice within, art thus distraught with grief?

H. My lord—for already I have learnt to say that name—I am undone; my luck is gone; I cease to be.

Theoc. In what misfortune art thou plunged? What hath happened?

H. Menelaus, ah me! how can I say it? is dead, my husband.

Theoc. I show no exultation at this news, yet am I blest herein.

He

Theoc. How knowest thou? Did Theonoe tell thee this?

H. Both she, and one who was there when he perished.

Theoc. What! hath one arrived who actually announces this for certain?

H. One hath; oh may he come e'en as I wish him to!

Theoc. Who and where is he? that I may learn this more surely.

He. There he is, sitting crouched beneath the shelter of this tomb.

Theoc. Great Apollo! what a bundle of unsightly rags!

H. Ah me! methinks mine own husband too is in like plight.

Theoc. From what country is this fellow? whence landed he here?

H. From Hellas, one of the Achæans who sailed with my husband.

Theoc. What kind of death doth he declare that Menelaus died?

H. The most piteous of all, amid the watery waves at sea.

Theoc. On what part of the savage ocean was he sailing?

He. Cast up on the harbourless rocks of Libya.

Theoc. How was it this man did not perish if he was with him aboard?

H. There are times when churls have more luck than their betters.

Theoc. Where left he the wreck, on coming hither?

He. There, where perdition catch it, but not Menelaus!

Theoc. He is lost; but on what vessel came this man?

H. According to his story sailors fell in with him and picked him up.

Theoc. Where then is that mischievous thing that was sent to Troy in thy stead?

H. Dost mean the phantom-form of cloud? It hath passed into the air.

Theoc. O Priam, and thou land of Troy, how fruitless thy ruin!

He. I too have shared with Priam's race their misfortunes.

Theoc. Did this fellow leave thy husband unburied, or consign him to the grave?

H. Unburied; woe is me for my sad lot!

Theoc. Wherefore hast thou shorn the tresses of thy golden hair?

H. His memory lingers fondly in this heart, whate'er his fate.

Theoc. Are thy tears in genuine sorrow for this calamity?

He An easy task no doubt to escape thy sister s detection!

Theoc No surely impossible Wilt thou still make this tomb thy abode?

He Why jeer at me? canst thou not let the dead man be?

Theoc No thy loyalty to thy husband s memory makes thee fly from me

He I will do so no more prepare at once for my marriage

Theoc Thou hast been long in bringing thyself to it still I do commend thee now

He Dost know thy part? Let us forget the past

Theoc On what terms? One good turn deserves another

He Let us make peace be reconciled to me

Theoc I relinquish my quarrel with thee let it take wings and fly away

He Then by thy knees since thou art my friend indeed—

Theoc What art so bent on winning that to me thou stretchest out a suppliant hand?

He My dead husband would I fain bury

Theoc What tomb can be bestowed on lost bodies? Wilt thou bury a shade?

He In Hellas we have a custom whene er one is drowned at sea—

Theoc What is your custom? The race of Pelops truly hath some skill in matters such as this

He To hold a burial with woven robes that wrap no corpse

Theoc Perform the ceremony rear the tomb where er thou wilt

He Tis not thus we give drowned sailors burial

Theoc How then? I know nothing of your customs in Hellas.

He We unmoor and carry out to sea all that is the dead man s due

Theoc What am I to give thee then for thy dead husband?

He Myself I cannot say I had no such experience in my previous happy life

Theoc Stranger thou art the bearer of tidings I welcome

Men Well *I do not nor yet doth the dead* man

Theoc How do ye bury those who have been drowned at sea?

Men Each according to his means

Theoc As far as wealth goes name thy wishes for this lady s sake

Men There must be a blood-offering first to the dead

Theoc Blood of what? Do thou show me and I will comply

Men Decide that thyself whate er thou givest will suffice

Theoc Amongst barbarians tis customary to sacrifice a horse or bull

Men If thou givest at all let *there be nothing* mean in thy gift

Theoc I have no lack of such in my rich herds

Men Next an empty bier is decked and carried in *procession*

Theoc It shall be so what else is it customary to add?

Men Bronze arms for war was his delight

Theoc These will be worthy of the race of Pelops, and these will we give

Men And with them all the fair increase of productive earth

Theoc And next how do ye pour these offerings into the billows?

Men There must be a ship ready and rowers.

Theoc How far from th shore does th ship put out?

Men So far that the foam in her wake can scarce be seen from the strand

Theoc Why so? wherefore doth Hellas observe this custom?

Men That the billow may not cast up again our expiatory offerings

Theoc Phœnician rowers will soon cover the distance

Men Twill be well done and gratifying to Menelaus too

Theoc Canst thou not perform these rites well enough without Helen?

Men This task belongs to mother wife or children

Theoc Tis her task then according to thee to bury her husband

Men To be sure piety demands that the dead be not robbed of their due

Theoc Well let her go tis my interest to foster piety in a wife And thou enter the house and choose adornment for the dead Thyself too will I not send empty handed away since thou hast done her a service And for the good news thou hast brought me thou shalt receive raiment instead of going bare and food too that thou mayst reach thy country for as it is I see thou art in sorry plight As for thee poor lady waste not thyself in a hopeless case Menelaus has met his doom and thy dead husband cannot come to life

Men This then is thy duty fair young wife be *content with thy present* husband and forget him who has no existence for this is thy best course in face of what is happening And if ever I come to Hellas and secure my safety I will clear thee of thy former ill repute if thou prove a dutiful wife to thy true husband

He I will never shall my husband have cause to blame me thou shalt thyself attend us and be witness thereto Now go within poor wanderer and seek the bath and change thy raiment I will show my kindness to thee and that without delay For thou wilt perform all service due with kindlier feeling for my dear lord Menelaus if at my hands thou meet with thy deserts

Exeunt THEOCLYMENUS HELEN MENELAUS

Ch Through wooded glen o er torrent s flood and ocean s booming waves rushed the mountain goddess mother of the gods in frantic haste once

lon ago, yearning for her daughter lost whose name men dare not utter loudly rattled the Bacchic castanets in shrill accord what time those maidens, swift as whirlwinds sped forth with the goddess on her chariot yoked to wild creatures, in quest of her that was ravished from the circling choir of virgins here was Artemis with her bow and there the grim eyed goddess, sheathed in mail and spear in hand But Zeus looked down from his throne in heaven and turned the issue otherwise ther Soon as the mother ceased from her wild wandering toil in seeking her daughter stolen so subtly as to baffle all pursuit she crossed the snow-capped heights of Ida's nymphs and in anguish cast her down amongst the rocks and brushwood deep in snow and denying to man all increase to his tillage from those barren fields, she wasted the human race nor would she let the leafy tendrils yield luxuriant fodder for the cattle whence full many a beast lay dying no sacrifice was offered to the gods, and on the altars were no cakes to burn yea and she made the dew fed fountains of crystal water to cease their flow in her insatiate sorrow for her child But when for gods and tribes of men alike she made an end to festal cheer Zeus spoke out seeking to soothe the mother's moody soul Ye stately Graces go banish from Demeter's angry heart the grief her wanderings bring upon her for her child and go ye Muses too with tuneful choir Thereon did Cypris, fairest of the blessed gods, first catch up the crashing cymbals, native et that land and the drum with its stretched skin and then Demeter smiled and in her hand did take the deep-toned flute well pleased with its loud note Though thou wedded sth une ersho H thaved ne and fiance of Il right and thou hast incurred my daughter the wrath of the great mother by disregarding her sacrifices. Oh! mighty is the virtue in a dress of dappled fawn skin in ivy green that twineth round a sacred thyrsus in whirling tambourines struck as they revolve in air in tresses wildly streaming for the revelry of Bromius and likewise in the sleepless vigils of the goddess when the moon looks down and hid her and alone the scene Thou trusted in thy charms alone

Enter HELEN

He My friend within the palace all goes well for us for the daughter of Proteus, who is privy to our stealth schemes told her brother nothing when questioned by my husband's coming but for my sake declared him dead and buried Most fortunate it is that he hath had the luck to get these weapons for he is now himself clad in the harness he was to plunge into the sea his stalwart arm thrust through the buckler strap and in his right hand a spear on pretence of joining in honouring the dead He hath girded himself most serviceably for the fray for to triumph over a host of barbarian foes when once we are aboard yon oared ship; instead of his rags from the wreck hath he donned the robes I gave for his attire and I have bathed his limbs in water from the stream bath he long hath wanted But I must be silent for from the house comes forth the man who thinks he has me in his power prepared to be his bride and thy goodwill I also claim and thy strict silence if haply when we save ourselves we may save thee too some day

Enter THEOCLYMENUS *and* MENELAUS

Theoc Advance in order servants, as the stranger hath directed bearing the funeral gifts the sea demands But thou Helen if thou wilt not misconstrue my words, be persuaded and here abide for thou wilt do thy husband equal service whether thou art present or not For I am afraid that some sudden shock of fond regret may prompt thee to plunge into the swollen tide in an ecstasy of gratitude toward thy former husband for thy grief for him though he is lost is running to excess

He O my new lord needs must I honour him with whom I first shared married joys for I could even die with my husband so well I loved him Yet how could he thank me were I to share death's doom with him? Still let me go and pay his funeral rites unto the dead in person The gods grant thee the boon I wish and this stranger too, for the assistance he is lending here! And thou shalt find in me a wife fit to share thy house since thou art rendering kindness to Menelaus and to me for surely these events are to some good fortune tending But now appoint someone to give us a ship wherein to convey these gifts that I may find thy kindness made complete

Theoc (*To an attendant*) Go thou and furnish them with a Sidonian galley of fifty oars and rowers also

He Shall not he command the ship who is ordering the funeral?

Theoc Most certainly my sailors are to obey him

He Repeat the order that they may clearly understand thee.

Theoc I repeat it and will do so yet again if that is thy pleasure

He Good luck to thee and to me in my designs!

Theoc Oh! waste not thy fair complexion with excessive weeping

He This day shall show my gratitude to thee.

Theoc The state of the dead is nothingness to toil for them is vain

He In what I say this world as well as that hath share

Theoc Thou shalt not find in me a husband at all inferior to Menelaus

He With thee have I no fault to find good luck is all I need

Theoc That rests with thyself if thou show thyself a loving wife to me

He This is not a lesson I shall have to learn now to love my friends

Theoc Is it thy wish that I should escort thee in person with active aid?

He God forbid! become not thy servant's servant O king!

Theoc Up and away! I am not concerned with customs which the race of Pelops holds My house

is pure for Menelaus did not die here go some one now and bid my vassal chiefs bring marriage offerings to my palace for the whole earth must re echo in glad accord the hymn of my wedding with Helen to make men envious Go stranger and pour into the sea s embrace these offerings to Helen s former lord and then speed back again with my bride that after sharing with me her marriage feast thou mayst set out for home or here abide in happiness

Exit THEOCLYMENUS

Men O Zeus who art called the father of all and god of wisdom look down on us and change our woe to joy! Lend us thy *ready help as we seek to drag* our fortunes up the rugged hill if with but thy finger tip thou touch us we shall reach our longed for goal Sufficient are the troubles we ere this have undergone Full oft have I invoked you gods to hear my joys and sorrows I do not deserve to be for ever unhappy but to advance and prosper Grant me but this one boon and so will ye crown my future with blessing *Exeunt* MENELAUS *and* HELEN

Ch Hail! thou swift *Phœnician ship of Sidon!* dear to the rowers mother to the foam leader of fair dolphins gambols what time the deep is hushed and still and Ocean s azure child the queen of calm takes up her parable and says Away! and spread your canvas to the ocean breeze Ho! sailors ho! come grip your oars of pine speeding Helen on her way to the sheltered beach where Perseus dwelt of yore [1] It may be thou wilt find the daughters[2] of Leucippus beside the brimming river[3] or before the temple of Pallas when at last with dance and revelry thou joinest in the merry midnight festival of Hyacinthus him whom Phœbus slew in the lists by a quoit hurled o er the mark wherefore did the son of Zeus ordain that Laconia s land should set apart that day for sacrifice there too shalt thou find the tender maid [4] whom ye left in your house for as yet no nuptial torch has shed its light for her

Oh! for wings to cleave the air in the track of Libyan cranes whose serried ranks leave far behind the wintry storm at the shrill summons of some veteran leader who raises his exultant cry as he wings his way o er plains that know no rain and yet bear fruitful *increase Ye feathered birds with necks out*stretched comrades of the racing clouds on! on! till ye reach the Pleiads in their central station and Orion lord of the night and as ye settle on Eurotas banks proclaim the glad tidings that Menelaus hath sacked the city of *Dardanus* and will soon be home Ye sons of Tyndareus at length appear speeding in your chariot through the sky denizens of heaven s courts beneath the radiant whirling stars guide this lady Helen safely o er the azure main across the foam flecked billows of the deep blue sea sending the mariners a favouring gale from Zeus and from your sister snatch the ill repute of wedding with a barbarian even the punishment bequeathed to her from that strife on Ida s mount *albeit she never went to the land of Ilium to the* battlements of Phœbus

Enter THEOCLYMENUS *and* MESSENGER

Messenger O king at last have I found thee in the palace for new tidings of woe art thou soon to hear from me

Theoc How now?

Mes Make haste to woo a new wife for Helen hath escaped

Theoc Borne aloft on soaring wings or treading still the earth?

Mes Menelaus has succeeded in bearing her hence twas he that brought the news of his own death

Theoc O monstrous story! what ship conveyed her from these shores? Thy tale is past belief

Mes The very ship thou didst thyself give the stranger and that thou mayest briefly know all he is gone taking thy sailors with him

Theoc How was it? I long to know for I never gave it a thought that a single arm could master all those sailors with whom thou wert despatched

Mes Soon as the daughter of Zeus had left this royal mansion and come unto the sea daintily picking her way most craftily she set to mourn her husband though he was not dead but at her side Now when we reached thy docks well walled we began to launch the fastest of Sidonian ships with her full complement of fifty rowers and each task in due succession followed some set up the mast others ranged the oars with their blades ready and stored the white sails within the hold and the rudder was let down astern and fastened securely While we were thus employed those *Hellenes who had been* fellow voyagers with Menelaus were watching us it seems and they drew nigh the beach clad in the rags of shipwrecked men—well built enough but squalid to look upon And the son of Atreus directly he saw them approach bespoke them craftily introducing the reason for his mourning Ye hapless mariners how have ye come hither? your Achæan ship where wrecked? Are ye here to help bury dead *Atreus son whose missing body this lady daughter* of Tyndareus is honouring with a cenotaph? Then they with feigned tears proceeded to the ship bearing aboard the offerings to be thrown into the deep for Menelaus Thereat were we suspicious and communed amongst ourselves *regarding the number* of extra passengers but still we kept silence out of respect for thy orders for by intrusting the command of the vessel to the stranger thou didst thus spoil all Now the other victims gave no trouble and we easily put them aboard only the bull refused to go forward along the gangway but rolled his eyes around and kept bellowing and arching his back and glaring askance toward his horns he would not let us touch him But Helen s lord cried out O! ye who laid waste the town of Ilium come pick up yon bull the dead man s offering on your stout shoulders as is the way in Hellas and cast him into the

[1] *i e* to Mycenæ said to have been fo nded by Perseus

[2] The daughters of Leucippus were pr estesses of Ath na and Artemis

[3] *i e* the Eurotas in Sparta and the temple of the Brazen House

[4] *i e* Hermione

bold and a be poke he drew his sword in read ness The they at his command came and caught up the bull and carried h m bod ly on to the deck And Menel s troked the horse on neck and br w coaxing it t go aboard At length when the ship was fully freighted Helen climbed the ladder with gracef l st p and took her seat m dway b twixt the rowers benches, and he sat by her side e en Menelaus who was called dead and the rest eq ally h vided on th right and left de f th ship sat them down ea h bes de h s man with swo d con ealed beneath their cloaks and the billows soon were echo ng to the rowers song as w hea d the boatswain s ote. Now when w were put out a space not ery far n r ry nea th helmsman asked Sh ll we sir stran er sail yet further o ur course or will this serv ? For thin it is to command the ship And he a sw red 'Tis far enough for me while in his r ght hand he gripped his word and stepped on to the p ow then ta ding o er the bull to slay it ever a wo d said he of any dead man but cut its throat nd thus mad pray r Pose d n lo d of the sea whose home is in th deep and ye holy dau ht [N eus, bri g me and my wif safe and sou d to Na plia s strand from hence! An n a gi h of blood fair me fo the strang r spouted into th tide One cried Th e is treachery in th s voy age hy hould we now sail t N uplia? Ci th o d r h lm ma t to thy rudder But the son of Atr us, ta d ng whe e he lew the bull called to his comrades, Why do y th p ck f Hellas, delay t smit and la, the barbari s nd fling th m from the ship into the waves? While t thy crew the boatswain cried the opposite comma d H ! som of y u cat h up cha ce spa s b eak up th benches, o s tch th oa blad from th thol a d beat o t the b ai s f these our fore gn foes Fo thwith up sprang each man the on part armed w th poles that sail use the oth r w th sw ds. And th ship ran do w th blood wh le Hele from her seat pon the te n th s heered them n Whe e is the fame ye won in T oy? show t awa n t these ba ba ians. The th y ha ted t the fray some would fall and som rise pa ga whil oth rs had t thou seen laid low n death. But M nelaus i full a mour mad h ai sw rd hand to ny point wh e b s hl l es per e ed h c m des in distress so e leapt from th ship d swam and he cleared th be l es f thy s Th n did the p inc set h mself t teer a d b l tl n mak a st aight cou se t H llas. So th set up th ma t nd fa ou g b eezes bl d th s re clea way while I f m death escaped l t m self down b th an h cha t th sea d j as l w pent one th w m r pe d escu d m a d d ew me t land t bri g t thee this message Ah! th is m ght mo se eabl t mank nd than a prud nt distru t

Ch I would t ha e bel e ed that Me elaus could ha luded and thee O king in the way h did on h s comi g

Theoc Woe is m ! cozened by a w man s tricks! My bride hath escaped me If the ship could have been pursued and overtaken I would have used e ery means forth ith to catch the strangers as it is, I will a enge myself upon my treacherous sister in that she sa Menelaus in my palace and d d not tell me Wherefore shall she ne ermore deceive an other by her prophetic art

Enter PORTRE S

Po Ho there! whither away so fast my lord? on what bloody thought i tent?

Theoc Wh ther Ju tice calls me Out of my path!

Po I will not loose thy robe *for on grievous mischief art thou bent.*

Theoc Shalt thou a slave control thy master?

Po Yea f r I am in my senses

Theoc I should n t say so if thou wilt not let me—

Po N v b t that I never ill

Theoc Slay my sister most accursed

Po Say rather most righteous

Theoc R ght ou ? she who betrayed me

Po Th re s an honourable treachery which tis r ght to commit

Theoc By giving my br de to another?

P Only to those who had a better right

Th c Who hath any rights o er *mine*?

Po He that re ei ed her f om her father

Theoc N y but f ri e ga e her to me

P And destiny took he aw y

Theoc 'Tis n t f r thee to decide my affairs.

Po Only suppos ng min be the better counsel

Theoc So I am thy subj ct not thy *ruler*

Po Aye a subject bound to do the r ght and eschew the w on

Theoc It seem thou art eager to be slain

P Slay me thy ste shalt tho i never slay with my consent b t m per ha e f r to d e for their maste is the fairest death that noble slaves can fi d

THE D SCURI *appears above the stage*

The D oscuri Restra n those bursts of rage that hurry thee to ndu lengths O Theoclymenus king of tl s co ntry We ar the twin son of Zeus that call to th e by n m whom Leda bore one day w th H len too ho hath fled from thy palace F r th u a t wroth for ma riage never destined for thee no t thy sister Theonoe, d u ht r of a Ne reid goddess, w ngin the because he honours the o d of God nd h r father s j st behests For it was dained that H l n s ould b de with n thy halls p till the p esent t me but s c Troy i razed to the ground a d she h th l nt her name to the goddesses o l ng r n ed the stay ow must she be n ted in the elf same wedlock as before and reach he hom nd share it with her h sba d W thh ld tl en thy mal g a t blade from thy ister nd belie e that sl e l erein is act ng w th discret o Lo g long a o had we ter sa d se ng th r Zeus has mad us god but we were too weak f destin as well a th d ties, who w lled these things to be Th s my b ddin to the whil to my s ter I say Sail on with thy hu band a d ye shall have

a prosperous breeze for we thy brethren twain will course along the deep and bring you safely to your fatherland And when at last thy goal is reached and thy life ended thou shalt be famous as a goddess and with thy twin brethren share the drink offering and like us receive gifts from men for such is the will of Zeus Yea and that spot[1] where the son of Maia first appointed thee a home when from Sparta he removed thee after stealing an image of thee from heaven s mansions to prevent thy marriage with Paris even the isle that lies like a sentinel along the Attic coast shall henceforth be called by thy name amongst men for that it welcomed thee when stolen from thy home Moreover Heaven ordains that the wanderer Menelaus shall find a home within an island of the blest for to noble souls hath the deity no dislike albeit these oft suffer more than those of no account

Theoc Ye sons of Leda and of Zeus I will forego my former quarrel about your sister nor seek to slay mine own any more Let Helen to her home repair if such is Heaven s pleasure Ye know that ye are sprung of the same stock as your sister best of women chastest too hail then for the true nobility of Helen s soul a quality too seldom found amongst her sex!

Ch Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes and many a thing God brings to pass contrary to expectation that which was looked for is not accomplished while Heaven finds out a way for what we never hoped e en such has been the issue here *Exeunt* OMNES

[1]Cranae off Sunium or Macri

ANDROMACHE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ANDROMACHE	MOLOSSUS
MAID	PELEUS
CHORUS OF PHTHIAN WOMEN	NURSE OF HERMIONE
HERMIONE	ORESTES
MENELAUS	MESSENGER
	THETIS

Before the temple of Thetis in Thessaly. Enter ANDROMACHE.

Andromache O city of Thebes, glory of Asia, whence on a day I came to Priam's princely home with many a rich and costly thing in my dower, affianced unto Hector to be the mother of his children, I Andromache, envied name in days of yore, but now of all women that have been or yet shall be the most unfortunate; for I have lived to see my husband Hector slain by Achilles, and the babe Astyanax, whom I bore my lord, hurled from the towering battlements, when the Hellenes sacked our Trojan home; and I myself am come to Hellas as a slave, though I was esteemed a daughter of a race most free, given to Neoptolemus that island prince, and set apart for him as his special prize from the spoils of Troy. And here I dwell upon the boundaries of Phthia and Pharsalia's town, where Thetis erst, the goddess of the sea, abode with Peleus apart from the world, avoiding the throng of men; wherefore the folk of Thessaly call it the sacred place of Thetis, in honour of the goddess's marriage. Here dwells the son of Achilles and suffers Peleus still to rule Pharsalia, not wishing to assume the sceptre while the old man lives. Within these halls have I borne a boy to the son of Achilles, my master. Now aforetime for all my misery I ever had a hope to lead me on, that if my child were safe I might find some help and protection from my woes; but since my lord in scorn of his bondmaid's charms hath wedded that Spartan Hermione, I am tormented by her most cruelly; for she saith that I by secret enchantment am making her barren and distasteful to her husband, and that I design to take her place in this house, ousting her therefrom by force; whereas I at first submitted against my will and now have resigned my place; be almighty Zeus my witness that it was not of mine own free will I became her rival!

But I cannot convince her, and she longs to kill me, and her father Menelaus is an accomplice in this. E'en now is he within, arrived from Sparta for this very purpose; while I in terror am come to take up a position here in the shrine of Thetis adjoining the house, if haply it may save me from death; for Peleus and his descendants hold it in honour as a symbol of his marriage with the Nereid. My only son am I secretly conveying to a neighbour's house in fear for his life. For his sire stands not by my side to lend his aid and cannot avail his child at all, being absent in the land of Delphi, where he is offering recompense to Loxias for the madness he committed, when on a day he went to Pytho and demanded of Phoebus satisfaction for his father's death, if haply his prayer might avert those past sins and win for him the god's goodwill hereafter.

Enter MAID.

Maid Mistress mine, be sure I do not hesitate to call thee by that name, seeing that I thought it thy right in thine own house also, when we dwelt in Troy land; as I was ever thy friend and thy husband's while yet he was alive, so now have I come with strange tidings, in terror lest any of our masters learn hereof but still out of pity for thee; for Menelaus and his daughter are forming dire plots against thee, whereof thou must beware.

An. Ah! kind companion of my bondage, for such thou art to her who, erst thy queen, is now sunk in misery; what are they doing? What new schemes are they devising in their eagerness to take away my wretched life?

Ma. Alas! poor lady, they intend to slay thy son whom thou hast privily conveyed from out the house.

An. Ah me! Has she[2] heard that my babe was put out of her reach? Who told her? Woe is me! how utterly undone!

Ma. I know not, but thus much of their schemes I heard myself; and Menelaus has left the house to fetch him.

An. Then am I lost; ah my child! those vultures twain will take and slay thee; while he who is called thy father lingers still in Delphi.

Ma. True, for had he been here thou wouldst not have fared so hardly, I am sure; but, as it is, thou art friendless.

An. Have no tidings come of the possible arrival of Peleus?

[1] In Cilicia.

[2] Hermione.

Ma He is too old to help thee if he came

An And yet I sent for him more than once

Ma Surely thou dost not suppose that any of thy messengers heed thee?

An Why should they? Wilt thou then go for me?

Ma How shall I explain my long absence from the house?

An Thou art a woman thou canst invent a hundred ways

Ma There is a risk for Hermione keeps no careless guard

An Dost look to that? Thou art disowning thy friends in distress

Ma Not so never taunt me with that I will go for of a truth a woman and a slave is not of much account even if aught befall me

An Go then while I will tell to heaven the lengthy tale of lamentation mourning and weeping that has ever been my hard lot (*Exit* MAID) for tis woman s way to delight in present misfortunes even to keeping them always on her tongue and lips But I have many reasons not merely one for tears—my city s fall my Hector s death the hardness of the lot to which I am bound since I fell on slavery s evil days undeservedly Tis never right to call a son of man happy till thou hast seen his end to judge from the way he passes it how he will descend to that other world

Twas no bride Paris took with him to the towers of Ilium but a curse to his bed when he brought Helen to her bower For her sake O Troy did eager warriors sailing from Hellas in a thousand ships capture and make thee a prey to fire and sword and the son of sea born Thetis mounted on his chariot dragged my husband Hector round the walls ah woe is me! while I was hurried from my chamber to the beach with slavery s hateful pall upon me And many a tear I shed as I left my city my bridal bower and my husband in the dust Woe woe is me! why should I prolong my life to serve Hermione? Her cruelty it is that drives me hither to the image of the goddess to throw my suppliant arms about it melting to tears as doth a spring that gushes from the rock

Enter CHORUS OF PHTHIAN WOMEN

Chorus Lady thus keeping thy weary station without pause upon the floor of Thetis shrine Phthian though I am to thee a daughter of Asia I come to see if I can devise some remedy for these perplexing troubles which have involved thee and Hermione in fell discord because to thy sorrow thou sharest with her the love of Achilles son Recognize thy position weigh the present evil into the which thou art come Thou art a Trojan captive thy rival is thy mistress a true born daughter of Sparta Leave then this home of sacrifice the shrine of our sea goddess How can it avail thee to waste thy comeliness and disfigure it by weeping by reason of a mistress s harsh usage? Might will prevail against thee why vainly toil in thy feebleness? Come quit the bright sanctuary of the Nereid divine. Recognize that thou art in bondage on a foreign soil in a strange city where thou seest none of all thy friends, luckless lady cast on evil days Yea I did pity thee most truly Trojan dame when thou camest to this house but from fear of my mistress I hold my peace albeit I sympathize with thee lest she whom Zeus daughter bore discover my good will toward thee

Enter HERMIONE

Hermione With a crown of golden workmanship upon my head and about my body this embroidered robe am I come hither no presents these I wear from the palace of Achilles or Peleus but gifts my father Menelaus gave me together with a sumptuous dower from Sparta in Laconia to insure me freedom of speech Such is my answer to you but as for thee slave and captive thou wouldst fain oust me and secure this palace for thyself and thanks to thy enchantment I am hated by my husband thou it is that hast made my womb barren and cheated my hopes for Asia s daughters have clever heads for such villainy yet will I check thee therefrom nor shall this temple of the Nereid avail thee aught no! neither its altar or shrine but thou shalt die But if or god or man should haply wish to save thee thou must atone for thy proud thoughts of happier days now past by humbling thyself and crouching prostrate at my knees by sweeping out my halls and by learning as thou sprinklest water from a golden ewer where thou now art Here is no Hector no Priam with his gold but a city of Hellas Yet thou miserable woman hast gone so far in wantonness that thou canst lay thee down with the son of the very man that slew thy husband and bear children to the murderer Such is all the race of barbarians father and daughter mother and son sister and brother mate together the nearest and dearest stain their path with each other s blood and no law restrains such horrors Bring not these crimes amongst us for here we count it shame that one man should have the control of two wives and men are content to turn their attention to one lawful love that is all who care to live an honourable life

Ch Women are by nature somewhat jealous and do ever show the keenest hate to rivals in their love

An Ah! well a day! Youth is a bane to mortals in every case that is where a man embraces injustice in his early days Now I am afraid that my being a slave will prevent thee listening to me in spite of many a just plea or if I win my case I fear I may be damaged on this very ground for the high and mighty cannot brook refuting arguments from their inferiors still I will not be convicted of betraying my own cause Tell me proud young wife what assurance can make me confident of wresting from thee thy lawful lord? Is it that Laconia s capital yields to Phrygia? is it that my fortune outstrips thine? or that in me thou seest a free woman? Am I so elated by my youth my full healthy figure the extent of my city the number of my friends that I wish to supplant thee in thy home? Is my purpose to take thy place and rear myself a race of slaves, mere appendages to my misery? or supposing thou bear no children will any one endure that sons of

mı should rule o er Phthia? Ah no! there is the love that Hellas bears me both for Hector s sak and for my own humbl rank forsooth that never knew a q een s estate in Troy 'Tis not my so cery that makes thy husband hat thee, nay but thy own failur to pro e thyself his help-meet Herein lies lo e s o l harm t s n t beauty lady but virtuous acts that win our husband hearts And though t gall thee to be told so, albeit thy city in Laconia is no doubt a mı hty fact yet thou findest no place for his Scyros displayin wealth midst po ert a d settin Menelaus above Achilles and that is what alienates thy lord Tak heed for a woman thou h bestowed upon a worthless husband must be with h m ontent and ne er ad a ce presumptu us cla ms Suppo e thou hadst wedded a prince of Thra e the land f flood nd melt n snow where one lord shares his affections w th a host f wı es, wouldst thou ha e lain them? If so thou would t ha e set a stigma f insatiate l st on all ou sex A shameful char el And et herein we suff r more than men thou h we make a good stand against t. Ah! my dear lord Hecto for thy sake would I en brook ın L f e er Cypris led thee a tray and oft in da s gon by I h ld thy bastard babes to my own b east, to spar thee v cause for grief. By this ourse I bound m husband t me by virtue chains, wh reas thou wilt er so much a l t the drops of dew from hea en bo settle on th lord in thy jealous fea Oh! seek n t to surpass thy mother in ha k rın fter men fo ts well that all wise children should a oid the habit of such evil mothers.

Ch Mistr ss mı e be persuaded to c me to terms with h r as far as readily comes within thy power

H Wh this hau hty ton this bandying of wo ds, as if, forsooth thou n t I wert the irtuous f ?

A Th p esent claims t any rate give thee small ttl th reto.

H W man may my bosom never harbour su h ideas as thin !

A Thou art young to peak on so delicate a subject

H A for tl ee, thou dost not speak thereof, but, as thou ca s dost put t into action again t me

An Canst thou not conceal thy pangs f jealousy?

H What! doth t very woman put this first f all

A Yes, if h pen nces are happy otherwise th re is no honour in *speakin of them.*

H B barıa laws a not standard for our city

A Alik in Asia and in Hella nfamy attends ba e tion

H Cl er clever quibble ! yet d e thou must nd ha

A Dost see the image of Th tis with her eye pon thee?

H A hatte foe t thy country because of the death f Achilles.

A 'Twas not I that slew him, but Helen that mother of thine

He Pray is it thy intention to probe my wounds yet deeper?

An Behold I am dumb my lips are closed

He Tell me that which was my only reason for comin hith

A No! all I tell thee is, thou hast less wisdom than thou needest

He Wilt thou lea e these hallowed precincts of the sea goddess?

An Yes, if I am not to die for it otherwise I never w ll.

He Since that is thy resol e I shall not even wait my lord s return.

A N r yet will I at any rate ere that surrender to thee

He I will bring fire to bear on thee and pay no heed to thy entreat es

An Kindle thy blaze then the gods will witness it.

He And make th flesh to writhe by cruel wounds.

An Be in thy but h ry stain the altar of the goddess w th blood, for she will sit thy iniqu ty

H Barbarian creatur hard ned in impudence wilt thou bra e death tself? Still will I find speedy means to make thee quit this seat of th y free will such a ba t ha e I to lure thee w th But I w ll hide my meaning wh ch the e ent itself shall soon de clare Yes, keep thy seat f r I will make thee rise, though molten lead is holdin thee there before Achilles son thy trusted champion arri e

Exit HERMIONE

An My trusted champion yes! how stran e it is, that though some god hath d vised cures for mor tals against the enom of reptiles *no man e er yet* hath disco red au ht to cure a woman s venom which is far worse than vipe s sti g or scorchin flame so terrible a curse ar we to mankind

Ch Ah! what sorrows did the son of Zeus and Maia herald in the day he came to I la s *len rud* ing that fair oung trio of goddesses, all girded for the fray in b tt r ri alry about their beauty to the sheph rd s fold whe e dwelt the youthful herdsman ll alone by the hearth of his lonely hut Soon as they eached the wooded glen in gushin mountain *springs they bathed* their dazzli g skin then sou ht the son of Priam comparing thei rival charms in more than nc rous phrase But Cypris won the da by h r deceitful pr mises, sweet-soundin words, but frau ht with ruthless o erthrow to Phrygia s hapless town and Ilium s towers. Would God his mother had smitten him a cruel death blow on the head befo he made h s home on Ida slopes, in the hour Cassandra standing by the holy bay tree cried out Sla him *for h will brin* most grie ous bane on Priam s town. To e ery prin e she went to every lder sued fo the babe s destruction. Ah! had they listened Ilium s daughters ne er had f lt the yok of sla ery and thou lady hadst been established in the royal palace and Hellas had been freed of all th anguish she suffered during those ten long years her sons we t wandering spear in hand round the walls of Troy *brides* had ne er been left desolat, nor hoary fath ers childless.

Enter MENELAUS *with* MOLOSSUS

Menelaus Behold I bring thy son with me whom thou didst steal away to a neighbour s house without my daughter s knowledge Thou wert so sure this image of the goddess would protect thee and those who hid him but thou hast not proved clever enough for Menelaus And so if thou refuse to leave *thy station here he shall be slain instead of thee* Wherefore weigh it well wilt die thyself or see him slain for the sin whereof thou art guilty against me and my daughter?

An O fame fame! full many a man ere now of no account hast thou to high estate exalted Those indeed who truly have a fair repute I count blest but those who get it by false pretences I will never allow have aught but the accidental appearance of wisdom Thou for instance caitiff that thou art didst thou ever wrest Troy from Priam with thy picked troops of Hellenes? thou that hast raised such a storm at the word of thy daughter a mere child and hast entered the lists with a poor captive unworthy I count thee of Troy s capture and Troy still more disgraced by thy victory Those who only in appearance are men of sense make an outward show but inwardly *resemble the common herd* save it be in wealth which is their chiefest strength

Come now Menelaus let us discuss this argument Suppose I am slain by thy daughter and she work her will on me yet can she never escape the pollution of murder and public opinion will make thee too an accomplice in this deed of blood for thy *share in the business must needs implicate thee* But even supposing I escape death myself will ye kill my child? Even then how will his father brook the murder of his child? Troy has no such coward s tale to tell of him nay he will follow duty s call his actions will prove him a worthy scion of Peleus and Achilles Thy daughter will he thrust forth from his *house* and what wilt thou say *when seeking to betroth her to another?* wilt say her virtue made her leave a worthless lord? Nay that will be false Who then will wed her? wilt thou keep her without a husband in thy *halls* grown grey in widowhood? Unhappy wretch! dost not see the flood gates of trouble opening wide for thee? How many a wrong against a wife wouldst thou prefer thy daughter to have found to suffering what I now describe? We ought not on trifling grounds to promote serious mischief nor should men if we women are so deadly a curse bring their nature *down to our level* No! if as thy daughter asserts I am practising sorcery against her and making her barren right willingly will I without any crouching at altars submit in my own person to the penalty that lies in her husband s hands seeing that I am no less chargeable with injuring him if I make him childless This is my case but *for thee there is one thing I fear in thy disposition* it was a quarrel for a woman that really induced thee to destroy poor Ilium s town

Ch Thou hast said too much for a woman speaking to men *that* discretion hath shot away its last shaft from thy soul s quiver

Men Woman these are petty matters unworthy as thou sayest of my despotic sway unworthy too of Hellas Yet mark this well his special fancy of the hour is of more moment to a man than Troy s capture I then have set myself to help my daughter because I consider her loss of a wife s rights a grave matter for whatever else a woman suffers is secondary to this if she loses her husband s love she loses her life therewith Now as it is right Neoptolemus should rule my slaves so my friends and I should have control of his for friends if they be really friends keep nothing to themselves but have all in common So if I wait for the absent instead of making the best arrangement I can at once of my affairs, I show weakness not wisdom Arise then leave the goddess s shrine for by thy death this child escapeth his whereas if thou refuse to die I will slay him *for one of you twain must perish*

An Ah me! tis a bitter lot thou art offering about my life whether I take it or not I am equally unfortunate Attend to me thou who for a trifling cause art committing an awful crime Why art thou bent on slaying me? What reason hast thou? What city have I betrayed? Which of thy children was *ever slain by me? What house have I fired?* I was forced to be my master s concubine and spite of that wilt thou slay me not him who is to blame passing by the cause and hurrying to the inevitable result? Ah me! my sorrows! Woe for my hapless country! How cruel my fate! Why had I to be a mother too and take upon me a double load of suf*fering? Yet why do I mourn the past* and o er the present never shed a tear or compute its griefs? I that saw Hector butchered and dragged behind the chariot and Ilium piteous sight! one sheet of flame while I was haled away by the hair of my head to the Argive ships in slavery and on my arrival in Phthia was assigned to Hector s murderer as his mistress What pleasure then has life for me? Whither am I to turn my gaze? to the present or the past? My babe alone was left me the light of my life and him these ministers of death would slay No! they shall not if my poor life can save him *for if he be* saved hope in him lives on while to me twere shame to refuse to die for my son Lo! here I leave the altar and give myself into your hands to cut or stab to bind or hang Ah! my child to Hades now thy mother passes to save thy dear life Yet if thou escape thy doom remember me my sufferings and *my death and tell thy father how I fared* with fond caress and streaming eye and arms thrown round his neck Ah! yes his children are to every man as his own soul and whoso sneers at this through inexperience though he suffers less anguish yet tastes the bitter in his cup of bliss.

Ch Thy tale with pity fills me for every man alike *stranger though he be* feels pity for another s distress Menelaus tis thy duty to reconcile thy daughter and this captive giving her a respite from sorrow

Men Ho! sirrahs catch me this woman hold her fast for tis no welcome story she will have to hear

It was to make thee leave the holy altar of the goddess that I held thy child's death before thine eyes, and so induced thee to give thyself up to me to die. So stands the case; be well assured; but as for this child, my daughter shall decide whether she will slay him or no. Get thee hence into the house, and there learn to bridle thy insolence in speaking to the free, slave that thou art.

An. Alas! thou hast by treachery beguiled me; I was deceived.

Men. Proclaim it to the world; I do not deny it.

An. Is this counted cleverness amongst you who dwell by the Eurotas?

Men. Yes, and amongst Trojans too, that those who suffer should retaliate.

An. Thinkest thou God's hand is shortened, and that thou wilt not be punished?

Men. Whene'er that comes, I am ready to bear it. But thy life will I have.

An. Wilt likewise slay this tender chick, whom thou hast snatched from neath my wing?

Men. Not I; but I will give him to my daughter to slay if she will.

An. Ah me! why not begin my mourning then for thee, my child?

Men. Of a truth 'tis no very sure hope that he has left.

An. O citizens of Sparta, the bane of all the race of men, schemers of guile, and masters in lying, devisers of evil plots, with crooked minds and tortuous method, and never one honest thought, 'tis wrong that ye should thus prosper in Hellas. What crime is wanting in your list? How rife is murder with you! How covetous ye are! One word upon your lips, another in your heart, this is what men always find with you. Perdition catch ye! Still death is not so grievous, as thou thinkest, to me. No! for my life ended in the day that hapless Troy was destroyed with my lord, that glorious warrior, whose spear oft made thee a coward and like thee quit the field and seek thy ship. But now against a woman hast thou displayed the terrors of thy panoply, and wouldst be murderer. Strike then! for this my tongue shall never flatter thee or that daughter of thine. For though thou wert of great account in Sparta, why so was I in Troy. And if I am now in sorry plight, presume not thou on that; thou too mayst be so yet.

Exeunt ANDROMACHE, *the* SLAVES, *and* MOLOSSUS.

Ch. Never oh never will I commend rival wives or sons of different mothers, a cause of strife, of bitterness, and grief in every house. I would have a husband content with one wife whose rights he shareth with no other. Not even in states is dual monarchy better to bear than undivided rule; it only doubles burdens and causes faction amongst the citizens. Often too will the Muse sow strife 'twixt rivals in the art of minstrelsy. Again, when strong winds are drifting mariners, the divided counsel of the wise is not conducive to steering, and their collective wisdom has less weight than the inferior mind of the single man who has sole authority; for this is the essence of power alike in house and state, whene'er men care to find the proper moment. This Spartan, the daughter of the great chief Menelaus, proves this; for she hath kindled hot fury against a rival, and is bent on slaying the hapless Trojan maid and her child to further her bitter quarrel. 'Tis a murder gods and laws and kindness all forbid. Ah! lady, retribution for this deed will visit thee yet.

But lo! before the house I see those two united souls, condemned to die. Alas! for thee, poor lady, and for thee, unhappy child, who art dying on account of thy mother's marriage, though thou hast no share therein and canst not be blamed by the royal house.

Enter MENELAUS, *leading* ANDROMACHE *and* MOLOSSUS.

An. Behold me journeying on the downward path, my hands so tightly bound with cords that they bleed.

Molossus. O mother, mother mine! I too share thy downward path, nestling neath thy wing.

An. A cruel sacrifice! ye rulers of Phthia!

Mo. Come, father! succour those thou lovest.

An. Rest there, my babe, my darling, on thy mother's bosom, e'en in death and in the grave.

Mo. Ah, woe is me! what will become of me and thee too, mother mine?

Men. Away to the world below! from hostile towers ye came, the pair of you; two different causes necessitate your deaths; my sentence takes away thy life, and my daughter Hermione's requires his; for it would be the height of folly to leave our foemen's sons, when we might kill them and remove the danger from our house.

An. O husband mine! I would I had thy strong arm and spear to aid me, son of Priam.

Mo. Ah, woe is me! what spell can I now find to turn death's stroke aside?

An. Embrace thy master's knees, my child, and pray to him.

Mo. Spare, O spare my life, kind master!

An. Mine eyes are wet with tears, which trickle down my cheeks, as doth a sunless spring from a smooth rock. Ah me!

Mo. What remedy, alas! can I provide me against my ills?

Men. Why fall at my knees in supplication? hard as the rock and deaf as the wave am I. My own friends have I helped, but for thee have I no touch of affection; for verily it cost me a great part of my life to capture Troy and thy mother; so thou shalt reap the fruit thereof and into Hades' halls descend.

Ch. Behold! I see Peleus drawing nigh; with aged step he hasteth hither.

Enter PELEUS, *with attendants.*

Peleus (*Catching sight of the executioners*) What means this? I ask you and you, executioner; why is the palace in an uproar? give a reason; what mean your lawless machinations? Menelaus, hold thy hand. Seek not to outrun justice. (*To his attendant*) Forward! faster, faster! for this matter, methinks, admits of no delay; now if ever would I fain resume the vigour of my youth. First however will I breathe

new life into this captive being to her as the breeze that blows a ship before the wind Tell me by what right have they pinioned thine arms and are dragging thee and thy child away? like a ewe with her lamb art thou led to the slaughter while I and thy lord were far away

An Behold them that are haling me and my child to death e en as thou seest aged prince Why should I tell thee? For not by one urgent summons alone but by countless messengers have I sent for thee No doubt thou knowest by hearsay of the strife in this house with this man s daughter and the reason of my ruin So now they have torn and are dragging me from the altar of Thetis the goddess of thy chiefest adoration and the mother of thy gallant son without any proper trial yea and without waiting for my absent master because forsooth they knew my defencelessness and my child s whom they mean to slay with me his hapless mother though he has done no harm But to thee O sire I make my supplication prostrate at thy knees though my hand cannot touch thy friendly beard save me I adjure thee reverend sir or to thy shame and my sorrow shall we be slain

Pe Loose her bonds I say ere some one rue it untie her folded hands

Men I forbid it for besides being a match for thee I have a far better right to her

Pe What! art thou come hither to set my house in order? Art not content with ruling thy Spartans?

Men She is my captive I took her from Troy

Pe Aye but my son s son received her as his prize

Men Is not all I have his and all his mine?

Pe For good but not evil ends and surely not for murderous violence

Men Never shalt thou wrest her from my grasp

Pe With this good staff I ll stain thy head with blood!

Men Just touch me and see! Approach one step!

Pe What! shalt thou rank with men? chief of cowards son of cowards! What right hast thou to any place mongst men? Thou who didst let a Phrygian rob thee of thy wife leaving thy home without bolt or guard as if forsooth the cursed woman thou hadst there was a model of virtue No! a Spartan maid could not be chaste e en if she would who leaves her home and bares her limbs and lets her robe float free to share with youths their races and their sports—customs I cannot away with Is it any wonder then that ye fail to educate your women in virtue? Helen might have asked thee this seeing that she said goodbye to thy affection and tripped off with her young gallant to a foreign land And yet for her sake thou didst marshal all the hosts of Hellas and lead them to Ilium whereas thou shouldst have shown thy loathing for her by refusing to stir a spear once thou hadst found her false yea thou shouldst have let her stay there and even paid a price to save ever having her back again But that was not at all the way thy thoughts were turned wherefore many a brave life hast thou ended and many an aged mother hast thou left childless in her home and grey haired sires of gallant sons hast reft. Of that sad band am I a member seeing in thee Achilles murderer like a malignant fiend for thou and thou alone hast returned from Troy without a scratch bringing back thy splendid weapons in their splendid cases just as they went As for me I ever told that amorous boy to form no alliance with thee nor take unto his home an evil mother s child for daughters bear the marks of their mothers ill repute into their new homes Wherefore ye wooers take heed to this my warning Choose the daughter of a good mother And more than this with what wanton insult didst thou treat thy brother bidding him sacrifice his daughter in his simpleness! So fearful wast thou of losing thy worthless wife Then after capturing Troy—for thither too will I accompany thee—thou didst not slay that woman when she was in thy power but as soon as thine eyes caught sight of her breast thy sword was dropped and thou didst take her kisses fondling the shameless traitress, too weak to stem thy hot desire thou caitiff wretch! Yet spite of all thou art the man to come and work havoc in my grandson s halls when he is absent seeking to slay with all indignity a poor weak woman and her babe but that babe shall one day make thee and thy daughter in thy home rue it e en though his birth be trebly base Yea for oft ere now hath seed sown on barren soil prevailed o er rich deep tilth and many a bastard has proved a better man than children better born Take thy daughter hence with thee! Far better is it for mortals to have a poor honest man either as married kin or friend than a wealthy knave but as for thee thou art a thing of naught

Ch The tongue from trifling causes contrives to breed great strife mongst men wherefore are the wise most careful not to bring about a quarrel with their friends

Men Why pray should one call these old men wise or those who once had a reputation in Hellas for being so? when thou the great Peleus son of a famous father connected with me by marriage employest language disgraceful to thyself and abusive of me because of a barbarian woman though thou shouldst have banished her far beyond the streams of Nile or Phasis and ever encouraged me seeing that she comes from Asia s continent where fell so many of the sons of Hellas victims to the spear and likewise because she shared in the spilling of thy son s blood for Paris who slew thy son Achilles was brother to Hector whose wife she was And dost *thou* enter the same abode with her and deign to let her share thy board and suffer her to rear her brood of vipers in thy house? But I after all this foresight for thee old man and myself am to have her torn from my clutches for wishing to slay her Yet come now for there is no disgrace in arguing the matter out suppose my daughter has no child while this woman s sons grow up wilt thou set them up to rule the land of Phthia barbarians born and bred to lord it over Hellenes? Am I then so void of sense because I hate injustice and thou so full of

cleverness? Consider yet another point; say thou hadst given a daughter of thine to some citizen, and hadst then seen her thus treated, wouldst thou have sat looking on in silence? *I trow not.* Dost thou then for a foreigner rail thus at thy nearest friends? Again, thou mayst say, husband and wife have an equally strong case if she is wronged by him, and similarly if he find her guilty of indiscretion in his house; yet whilst he has ample powers in his own hands, she depends on parents and friends for her case. Surely then I am right in helping my own kin! Thou art in thy dotage; for thou wilt do me more good by speaking of my generalship than by concealing it. Helen's trouble was not of her own choosing, but sent by heaven, and it proved a great benefit to Hellas; her sons, till then untried in war or arms, turned to deeds of prowess, and it is experience which teaches man all he knows. I showed my wisdom in refraining from slaying my wife, directly I caught sight of her. Would that thou *too hadst ne'er slain* Phocus! All this I bring before thee in pure goodwill, not from anger. But if thou resent it, thy tongue may wag till it ache, yet shall I gain by prudent forethought.

Ch. Cease now from idle words, 'twere better far, for fear ye both alike go wrong.

Pe. Alas! what evil customs now prevail in Hellas! Whene'er the host sets up a trophy o'er the foe, men *no more* consider this the work of those who really toiled, but the general gets the credit for it. Now he was but one among ten thousand others to brandish his spear; he only did the work of one; but yet he wins more praise than they. Again, as magistrates in all the grandeur of office, they scorn the common folk, though they are naught themselves; whereas those *others* are ten thousand times more wise than they, if daring combine with judgment. Even so thou and thy brother, exalted by the toilsome efforts of others, now take your seats in all the swollen pride of Trojan fame and Trojan generalship. But I will teach thee henceforth to consider Idaean Paris a foe less terrible than Peleus, unless forthwith thou pack from this roof, *thou and thy* childless daughter too, whom mine own true son will hale through his halls by the hair of her head; for her barrenness will not let her endure fruitfulness in others, because she has no children herself. Still if she is unlucky in the matter of offspring, is that a reason why we should be left childless? Begone! ye varlets, let her go! I will soon see *if any one* will *hinder me* from loosing her hands. (*To* ANDROMACHE) Arise; these trembling hands of mine will untie the twisted thongs that bind thee. Out on thee, coward! is this how thou hast galled her wrists? Didst think thou wert lashing up a lion or bull? or wert afraid she would snatch a sword and defend herself against thee? Come, child, nestle to thy *mother's* arms; help me loose her bonds; I will yet rear thee in Phthia to be their bitter foe. If your reputation for prowess and the battles ye have fought were taken from you Spartans, in all else, be very sure, you have not your *inferiors*.

Ch. The race of old men practises no restraint; and their testiness makes it hard to check them.

Men. Thou art only too ready to rush into abuse; while as for me, I came to Phthia by constraint and have therefore no intention either of doing *or suffering* anything mean. Now must I return home, for I have no time to waste; *for there is a city* not so very far from Sparta, which aforetime was friendly but now is hostile; against her will I march with my army and bring her into subjection. And when I have arranged that matter as I wish, I will return; and face to face with my son-in-law I will give my version of the story and hear his. And if he punish her, and for the future she exercise self-control, she shall find me do the like; but if he storm, I'll storm as well; and every act of mine shall be a *reflex of his* own. As for thy babbling, I can bear it easily; for *like to a shadow as thou art*, thy voice is all thou hast, and thou art powerless to do aught but talk.

Exit MENELAUS.

Pe. Lead on, my child, safe beneath my sheltering wing, and thou too, poor lady; for thou art come into a quiet haven after the rude storm.

An. Heaven reward thee and all thy race, old sire, for having saved my child and me his hapless mother! Only beware lest they fall upon us twain in some lonely spot *upon the road and force me* from thee, when they see thy age, my weakness, and this child's tender years; take heed to this, that we be not a second time made captive, after escaping now.

Pe. Forbear such words, prompted by a woman's cowardice. Go on thy way; who will lay a finger on you? Methinks he will do it to his cost. For by heaven's grace I rule o'er many a knight and spearman bold in my kingdom of Phthia; yea, and myself *can still stand straight, no bent old man* as thou dost think; such a fellow as that a mere look from me will put to flight in spite of my years. For even an old man, be he brave, is worth a host of raw youths; for what avails a fine figure if a man is a coward?

Exeunt PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, *and* MOLOSSUS.

Ch. Oh! to have ne'er been born, or sprung from noble sires, the heir to mansions richly stored; for if aught untoward e'er befall, *there is no lack of* champions for sons of noble parents, and there is honour and glory for them when they are proclaimed scions of illustrious lines; time detracts not from the legacy these good men leave, but the light of their *goodness still burns* on when they are dead. Better is it not to win a discreditable victory, than to make justice miscarry by an invidious exercise of power; for such a victory though men think it sweet for the moment, grows barren in time and comes very near being a family reproach. This is the life I commend, this the life I set before me as my ideal, to exercise no authority beyond what is right either in the marriage-chamber or in the state. O aged son of Æacus! now am I sure that thou wert with the Lapithæ, wielding thy famous spear, when they fought the Centaurs; and on Argo's deck didst pass the cheerless strait beyond the sea-beat Symplegades on her

cleverness? Consider yet another point sav th u had t gi en a da hter of thine t some citizen and had t the seen h thu t eated w ld t thou ha e sat looks g i silence? I trow not Dost thou then for a f reigner rail thus at thy nearest friends? Aeat thou mayst sav h sba d and wif ha e an equally stron case if she is wronged by him a d similarly f he find her guilty of ndiscr ti n in his house yet wh le he has mpl po e s in hi *own hands* she d pends on parents and friends fo her case Surely then I am right in *helping my own kin*! Thou art in thy dota e f r thou wilt d me mo e good bv speaking f my g neralship than by concealing it H len s t ouble wa not of her own choosing but sent b hea e and it pro ed great benefit t H llas her so till th n u tried n war or arms, t rned t deeds f pro ess, a d it is e perien e which tea hes man ll he knows I showed my wisd m in frai g from slaying mv w fe directly I ca ght ght f h r Would that thou too hadst ne er slain Phocus! All thi I bring befo e thee in pure good ll, ot from nger B t if thou esent t thy tongue may wa till it ache yet hall I gain by prudent forethought

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P. Alas! what evil customs now prevail in Hellas! Whene'er the host sets up a trophy o'er the foe, men no more consider this the work of those who really toiled, but the general gets the credit for it. Now he was but one among ten thousand others to brandish his spear; he only did the work of one; but yet he wins more praise than they. Again, as magistrates in all the grandeur of office they scorn the common folk, though they are naught themselves; whereas those others are ten thousand times more wise than they, if daring combine with judgment. Even so thou and thy brother, exalted by the toilsome efforts of others, now take your seats in all the swollen pride of Trojan fame and Trojan generalship. But I will teach thee henceforth to consider Idaean Paris a foe less terrible than Peleus, unless forthwith thou pack from this roof, thou and thy childless daughter too, whom my own true son will hale through his halls by the hair of her head; for her barrenness will not let her endure fruitfulness in others, because she has no child herself. Still if she is unlucky in the matter of offspring, is that a reason why we should be left childless? Begone, ye varlets, let her go! I will soon see if any one will hinder me from loosing her hands (*To* ANDROMACHE) Arise; these trembling hands of mine will untie the twisted thongs that bind thee. Out on thee, coward! is this how thou hast galled her wrists? Didst thou think thou wert lashing up a lion or bull? or wert afraid she would snatch a sword and defend herself against thee? Come, child, nestle to thy mother's arms; help me loose her bonds; I will yet rear thee in Phthia to be their bitter foe. If your reputation for prowess and the battles ye have fought were taken from you Spartans, in all else be very sure you have not your inferiors.

Ch. The race of old men practises no restraint; and their testiness makes it hard to check them.

Men. Thou art only too ready to rush into abuse; while as for me, I came to Phthia by constraint and have therefore no intention either of doing or suffering anything mean. Now must I return home, for I have no time to waste, for there is a city not so very far from Sparta, which aforetime was friendly, but now is hostile; against her will I march with my army and bring her into subjection. And when I have arranged that matter as I wish, I will return; and face to face with my son-in-law I will give my version of the story and hear his. And if he punish her, and for the future she exercise self-control, she shall find me do the like; but if he storm, I'll storm as well; and every act of mine shall be a reflex of his own. As for thy babbling, I can bear it easily; for like to a shadow as thou art, thy voice is all thou hast, and thou art powerless to do aught but talk.

Exit MENELAUS.

Pe. Lead on, my child, safe beneath my sheltering wing, and thou too, poor lady; for thou art come into a quiet haven after the rude storm.

An. Heaven reward thee and all thy race, old sire, for having saved my child and me his hapless mother! Only beware lest they fall upon us twain in some lonely spot upon the road and force me from thee, when they see thy aged weakness, and this child's tender years; take heed to this, that we be not a second time made captive, after escaping now.

Pe. Forbear such words, prompted by a woman's cowardice. Go on thy way; who will lay a finger on you? Methinks he will do it to his cost. For by heaven's grace I rule o'er many a knight and spearman bold in my kingdom of Phthia; yea, and myself can still stand straight, no bent old man as thou dost think; such a fellow as that a mere look from me will put to flight in spite of my years. For even an old man, be he brave, is worth a host of raw youths; for what avails a fine figure if a man is a coward?

Exeunt PELEUS, ANDROMACHE, *and* MOLOSSUS.

Ch. Oh! to have never been born, or sprung from noble sires, the heir to mansions richly stored; for if aught untoward e'er befall, there is no lack of champions for sons of noble parents, and there is honour and glory for them when they are proclaimed scions of illustrious lines; time detracts not from the legacy these good men leave, but the light of their goodness still burns on when they are dead. Better is it not to win discreditable victory than to make justice miscarry by an invidious exercise of power; for such a victory though men think it sweet for the moment, grows barren in time and comes very near being a family reproach. This is the life I commend, this the life I set before me as my ideal, to exercise no authority beyond what is right either in the marriage-chamber or in the state. O aged son of Æacus! now am I sure that thou wert with the Lapithæ, wielding thy famous spear, when they fought the Centaurs; and on Argo's deck didst pass the cheerless strait beyond the sea-beat Symplegades on her

voyage of note and when in days long gone the son of Zeus spread slaughter round Troy's famous town, thou too didst share his triumphant return to Europe.

Enter NURSE.

Nurse Alas! good friends what a succession of troubles is to-day provided us! My mistress Hermione within the house deserted by her father and in remorse for her monstrous deed in plotting the death of Andromache and her child is bent on dying for she is afraid her husband will in requital for this expel her with dishonour from his house or put her to death because she tried to slay the innocent. And the servants that watch her can scarce restrain her efforts to hang herself, scarce catch the sword and wrest it from her hand So bitter is her anguish, and she hath recognized the villainy of her former deeds. As for me, friends I am weary of keeping my mistress from the fatal noose do ye go in and try to save her life for if strangers come, they prove more persuasive than the friends of every day

Ch Ah yes! I hear an outcry in the house amongst the servants, confirming the news thou hast brought Poor sufferer! she seems about to show a lively grief for her grave crimes for she has escaped her servants hands and is rushing from the house, eager to end her life

He (*Rushing wildly on to the stage*) Woe, woe is me! I will tear my hair and scratch cruel furrows in my cheeks.

Nu My child what wilt thou do? Wilt thou disfigure thyself?

He Ah me! ah me! Begone, thou fine-spun veil! float from my head away!

Nu Daughter cover up thy bosom fasten thy robe

He Why should I cover it? My crimes against my lord are manifest and clear they cannot be hidden

Nu Art so grieved at having devised thy rival's death?

He Indeed I am I deeply mourn my fatal deeds of daring alas! I am now accursed in all men's eyes!

Nu Thy husband will pardon thee this error

He Oh! why didst thou hunt me to snatch away my sword? Give, oh! give it back dear nurse that I may thrust it through my heart Why dost thou prevent me hanging myself?

Nu What! was I to let thy madness lead thee on to death?

He Ah me my destiny! Where can I find some friendly fire? To what rocky height can I climb above the sea or mid some wooded mountain glen there to die and trouble but the dead?

Nu Why vex thyself thus? on all of us sooner or later heaven's visitation comes

He Thou hast left me, O my father left me like a stranded bark all alone without an oar My lord will surely slay me no home is mine henceforth beneath my husband's roof. What god is there to whose statue I can as a suppliant haste? or shall I throw myself in slavish wise at slavish knees? Would I could speed away from Phthia's land on bird's dark pinion, or like that pine built ship[1] the first that ever sailed betwixt the rocks Cyanean!

Nu My child I can as little praise thy previous sinful excesses, committed against the Trojan captive, as thy present exaggerated terror Thy husband will never listen to a barbarian's weak pleading and reject his marriage with thee for this. For thou wast no captive from Troy whom he wedded, but the daughter of a gallant sire, with a rich dower from a city too of no mean prosperity Nor will thy father forsake thee, as thou dreadest, and allow thee to be cast out from this house. Nay enter now nor show thyself before the palace, lest the sight of thee there bring reproach upon thee, my daughter

Ch Lo! a stranger of foreign appearance from some other land comes hurrying towards us.

Enter ORESTES

Orestes Ladies of this foreign land! is this the home, the palace of Achilles son?

Ch Thou hast it but who art thou to ask such a question?

Or The son of Agamemnon and Clytaemnestra, by name Orestes, on my way to the oracle of Zeus at Dodona But now that I am come to Phthia I am resolved to inquire about my kinswoman, Hermione of Sparta is she alive and well? for though she dwells in a land far from my own I love her none the less.

He Son of Agamemnon thy appearing is as a haven from the storm to sailors by thy knees I pray have pity on me in my distress, on me of whose fortunes thou art inquiring About thy knees I twine my arms with all the force of sacred fillets.

Or Ha! what is this? Am I mistaken or do I really see before me the queen of this palace, the daughter of Menelaus?

He The same that only child whom Helen daughter of Tyndareus, bore my father in his halls never doubt that

Or O saviour Phœbus, grant us respite from our woe! But what is the matter? art thou afflicted by gods or men?

He Partly by myself, partly by the man who wedded me and partly by some god On every side I see ruin

Or Why what misfortune could happen to a woman as yet childless, unless her honour is concerned?

He My very complaint! Thou hast hit my case exactly

Or On whom has thy husband set his affections in thy stead?

He On his captive, Hector's wife.

Or An evil case indeed for a man to have two wives.

He 'Tis even thus. So I resented it.

Or Didst thou with woman's craft devise a plot against thy rival?

He Yes, to slay her and her bastard child

Or And didst thou slay them or did something happen to rescue them from thee?

[1] Argo.

He It ‿as old Peleus who showed re ‿rd to the weaker side

Or H d t thou any accompl ce n t' s ttempted m‿d t?

He My father c me from Sparta for th very p rpose

Or And was he after all defeated by that old ma s p owes?

H Oh no! but by hame an f e hath gone a d left me all alo e

Or I understand thou art af id of thy hu band fo hat thou hast d ne

H Thou hast guessed it f r he w ll have a r ht to slay me What can I say for m self? Yet I be se ch thee by Zeus th god of our fam l send me to a land as far s pos ble from th s o c ms fa the s h use for these very walls seem t cry ut Bego e! and ll the la d of Phthia hates me B t f my l rd return ere that from tl ora le of Phoe bu h will put me to death o a shameful cha ge o en lave me to h s m tress whom I ruled bef re M be some one w ll say H w was it th ou d dst go thu astray? I was ru ned by mischievous wom en who came to me a d puffed me up w th w rds l k these What! wilt thou suff r th t vile cap ti e, a me e bordma d t dwell with n thy h use and shar thy wedded r ht? By Hea en s queen! if it ere my house she should not li e t re p my mar g harvest! And I l ste ed t the wo ds f these S th eu n g kna h s *bil p at rs a d* wa filled with silly tho t t What eed had I t e about my lo d? I had all I wanted wealth n pl ty a house i wh ch I was m st ss, and *a lor* h ldren mine would be born in wedlock wh le *h* ers wo ld be ha f a s, half sl ves to m e Oh! e ne e —th s truth w ll I repe t— hould men f se se wh ha e w ves, allow w m n f lk to isit th m n th r homes fo th y teach them m sch f *on* to g n some pri ate end helps t c *rrupt* th s h nou an ther ha ing made a l p h rself wa ts compa i n s m fortu while ma y are ‿a t nd! h n e ti men s houses a e ta t d Where f r k p *ye tr t g ard upon the portals of y ur house* th bolt a d ba s f r these sit of t nge m n lead to n good res lt but a wo ld of mis ch f

Ch Thou h st g ve thy tong e too free a re n g d g thy ow sex I ca pa d ‿ee this ase b t t ll wom n ou bt t smooth o e ther te weaknesses.

Or Tw sag u sel h ga e h tau ht men t h a th a gum nt o both s*des. I fo in tx e* though a the confu n th h se the qua l bet een the nd Hers s w f w red h l nd t hed to see wh the th *would st y* h or f om fear of that capt e a t minded t q t there half w wit n y so mu h rega d f r thy message that b *ought me h the* the t ntion of ca ng thee awa from th house f, as now thou hould t grant m a cha f so g so l o th u w t m e f merl but it o l c g with thy present husband th ough th fath r *base ess* since he before invad ng Troy s d ma r s betrothed thee to m and then afterwards promised thee to thy present lord prov ded he captured the city of Troy

So as soo a Achilles son returned h th er I for ga e thy fathe but entreated the bridegroom to f r ‿o h s marriage with thee telling him all I had gone th ough and my present misfortune I m ht get a wife I said from amongst fr ends but out de their circle twas no easy ta k for one exiled l ke my self from home Thereat he grew abu e taunting me with my mother s murder and those blood boltered fiends And I was humbled by the fortunes of my h use and though ti true I grieved yet did I e dure my sorrow and reluctantly *departed* r b ed of thy p omised ha d Now *therefore since* thou findest thy fortune so *abruptly changed and* art fall n thu ne l days a d hast no help I will take thee hen e and place thee in thy father s hands For kin h p hath stro g claims and in adversity there is naught better than a kinsman s kindly a d

H As for my marriage my father must look to it *t nor I r t to decide that* Yes take me hence as soon as may be lest my husband come back to his house bef re I am gone or Peleus hear that I am deserting his son s abode and pursue me on horse back

O Rest easy bout the old ma s power and as for Achilles son w th all his insol nce to me ne er fea h m such a crafty net this hand hath wo *en and* set f r h s death with k ts that *none can l ose* where f I will n t speak before the time but h *n* my pl t beg n to work *Delph s rock* will w tness *it If but my allies* in the Pythian land ab de by *the r oaths* this same murderer *I his mot er w ll* show that no one else shall marry th e my ghtful b de To his cost will he dema d satisfactio i of K g *Phœb* for his father s blood nor shall his repentance ava l him tho h h *is non subm tting* to the god No! he shall pe ish misera ably by Apollo s hand and *my false ccusat ons* so shall he find out *my enmity* For the deity upsets tl e fo tu e of them that hate h m and suffer the n not to be h gh minded *Exeu o rstes a d s rmo ie*

Ch O Phoebu ! who d dst fence th h ll f Ili m with a fa r cor nal of t wer nd tho *ocean* g d! co ng r th ma n with thy d rk st eds wh re fore d d ye hand *er in d sh our your own hands* w k to the *war god mast r* of the spear aband n ing Troy to wretched ess? M ny a ell t sed car ye y ked o t the banks f S m s and many a bloody to me t did ye rdain w th ne e prize o w n nd Il um s prin es a e dead a d gone longer in Troy is se n th bla e of fire on altar of the gods w th the smoke of *incense* Th son of At *eus* is no mo sla n by the han l f h s w fe and he herself hath pa d the d bt of blood by death and f om h r ch ld e s hands rece ed her doom The god s own bidd g f om his o acle w s levelled aga nst h r *w* th day th t g memn n s son set fo th from A gos nd is ted h h e so h slew her a e spilt h s own moth r s blood O *Phœb s O* tho power di ho can I belie e th story? Anon wh rever

Hellenes gather was heard the voice of lamentation mothers weeping o'er their children's fate as they left their homes to mate with strangers Ah! thou art not the only one nor thy dear ones either on whom the cloud of grief hath fallen Hellas had to bear the visitation and thence the scourge crossed to Phrygia's fruitful fields raining the bloody drops the death god loves

Enter PELEUS

Pe Ye dames of Phthia answer my questions I heard a vague rumour that the daughter of Menelaus had left these halls and fled so now am I come in hot haste to learn if this be true for it is the duty of those who are at home to labour in the interests of their absent friends

Ch Thou hast heard aright O Peleus ill would it become me to hide the evil case in which I now find myself our queen has fled and left these halls

Pe What was she afraid of? explain that to me

Ch She was fearful her lord would cast her out

Pe In return for plotting his child's death? surely not?

Ch Yea and she was afraid of yon captive

Pe With whom did she leave the house? with her father?

Ch The son of Agamemnon came and took her hence

Pe What view hath he to further thereby? Will he marry her?

Ch Yes and he is plotting thy grandson's death

Pe From an ambuscade or meeting him fairly face to face?

Ch In the holy place of Loxias leagued with Delphians

Pe God help us! This is an immediate danger Hasten one of you with all speed to the Pythian altar and tell our friends there what has happened here ere Achilles' son be slain by his enemies

Enter a MESSENGER

Messenger Woe worth the day! what evil tidings have I brought for thee old sire and for all who love my master! woe is me!

Pe Alas! my prophetic soul hath a presentiment

Mes Aged Peleus hearken! Thy grandson is no more so grievously is he smitten by the men of Delphi and the stranger[1] from Mycenæ

Ch Ah! what wilt thou do old man? Fall not uplift thyself

Pe I am a thing of naught death is come upon me My voice is choked my limbs droop beneath me

Mes Hearken if thou art eager also to avenge thy friends lift up thyself and hear what happened

Pe Ah destiny! how tightly hast thou caught me in thy toils a poor old man at life's extremest verge! But tell me how he was taken from me my one son's only child unwelcome as such news is I fain would hear it

Mes As soon as we reached the famous soil of Phœbus for three whole days were we feasting our eyes with the sight And this it seems caused suspicion for the folk who dwell near the god's shrine began to collect in groups while Agamemnon's son going to and fro through the town would whisper in each man's ear malignant hints "Do ye see yon fellow going in and out of the god's treasure chambers which are full of the gold stored there by all mankind? He is come hither a second time on the same mission as before eager to sack the temple of Phœbus" Thereon there ran an angry murmur through the city and the magistrates flocked to their council chamber while those who have charge of the god's treasures had a guard privately placed amongst the colonnades But we knowing naught as yet of this took sheep fed in the pastures of Parnassus and went our way and stationed ourselves at the altars with vouchers and Pythian seers And one said "What prayer young warrior wouldst thou have us offer to the god? Wherefore art thou come?" And he answered "I wish to make atonement to Phœbus for my past transgression for once I claimed from him satisfaction for my father's blood" Thereupon the rumour spread by Orestes proved to have great weight suggesting that my master was lying and had come on a shameful errand But he crosses the threshold of the temple to pray to Phœbus before his oracle and was busy with his burnt-offering when a body of men armed with swords set themselves in ambush against him in the cover of the bay trees, and Clytaemnestra's son that had contrived the whole plot was one of them There stood the young man praying to the god in sight of all when lo! with their sharp swords they stabbed Achilles' unprotected son from behind But he stepped back for it was not a mortal wound he had received and drew his sword and snatching armour from the pegs where it hung on a pillar took his stand upon the altar steps the picture of a warrior grim then cried he to the sons of Delphi and asked them "Why seek to slay me when I am come on a holy mission? What cause is there why I should die?" But of all that throng of bystanders no man answered him a word but they set to hurling stones. Then he though bruised and battered by the showers of missiles from all sides covered himself behind his mail and tried to ward off the attack holding his shield first here then there at arm's length but all of no avail for a storm of darts arrows and javelins hurtling spits with double points and butchers' knives for slaying steers came flying at his feet and terrible was the war dance thou hadst then seen thy grandson dance to avoid their marksmanship At last when they were hemming him in on all sides, allowing him no breathing space he left the shelter of the altar the hearth where victims are placed and with one bound was on them as on the Trojans of yore and they turned and fled like doves when they see the hawk Many fell in the confusion some wounded and others trodden down by one another along the narrow passages and in that hushed holy house uprose unholy din and echoed back from the rocks Calm and still my master stood there in his

[1] i.e. Orestes.

gleaming harness like a flash of li ht till from the inmost shrin there came a voice of thrilling horror stirring the crowd to make a stand Then fell Achil les son smitten through the flank by some Del phian s bitin blade some fellow that slew him w th a host t help and as he fell there was not one that did not stab him, or cast a rock and batter his corpse. So his whole body once so fair was marred with savage wounds. At la t they cast the lif less clay lying near th altar forth from the fragrant fane. And w gathered up his remains forthwith and are bringing them to thee old prince to mourn and weep and honour with a deep-dug tomb

This is how that prince who vouchsaf th oracles to others, that judge of what is right f r all the world h th reve ged himself on Achilles son, re memberin his ancient quarrel as a wicked man would How then can h be wise?

Exit MESSENGER

The body f OPTOLEMUS *is carried in o a bier*

Ch Lo! e en now our p ince is bei g carried on a bi r from Delphi s land unto his home Woe for him and his sad fat and woe for thee old sire! for this is not the welcome thou wouldst gi e A hilles son, the lion s whelp thyself too by this sad mischance dost ha his e il lot

Pe Ah! woe is me! h re is a sad sight for me to see and tak *unto my halls! Ah me! ah me! I am undone* thou c ty of Thessaly! My line now ends I ha e no ch ld en l ft me in my home. Oh! *the sorrows I* seem born to endure! What fri nd can I look to for rel f Ah, dear lips, and cheeks, and hands! Would thy destiny had slain thee neath Ilium s alls beside th ba ks of Simois!

Ch Had he so died my aged lord, h had won him honour thereby and thine had been the happier lot

P O marriag marriage, woe to thee! tho ba e of my home, thou destroye of m city! Ah my child my boy! would that the hono r of wedding thee fra ht with evil as t wa to my children and house had not thrown o r thee my son, Hermi one d adly net! O that th thunderbolt had slain her soon r! nd that thou ash mortal, had t never cha ged th g eat god Phœbus w th aiming that murderous shaft that pilt thy hero-father s blood!

Ch Woe oe! last W th d e bsery nc of f n eral rites will I begin the mourn ng for my dead ma er

Pe Ah k nd well a-day! I tak up the tearful dirg h me! old and r t hed as I am.

Ch Tis Hea e s dec ee God willed this heavy trok

P O da ling child, thou ha t l ft me all alone in m ha ls, old and hildless by *thy loss.*

Ch Thou shouldst ha e died old sire, bef r thy ch ld n

P Shal I not tea my ha r and smit upon my head th g evous blow O ty! of both my chil dren hath Phœbus robbed me

Ch What ils thou hast suffered, what sorrows thou ha t seen, thou poor old man! what shall be thy l f hereafter?

Pe Childless, desolate with no l mit to my grief, I must drain the cup of woe until I d e

Ch 'Twas all in ain the gods wished thee joy on thy wedding day

Pe All my hopes ha e flown away fallen short of my high boasts.

Ch A lonely dweller in lon ly home rt thou.

Pe I ha e no city any longer there! on th ground my sceptre d I cast and thou daughter of Nereus, neath thy dim grotto, shalt see me gro elling in the dust a ruined kin

Ch Look, look! (*A dim form of divine appe rance is seen hovering in mid air*) What is that moving? what influence di ine am I conscious of? Look, ma d ens, mark it well see yonder is some de ty wafted through the lustrous air and al ghting on the plains of Phthia home of steeds.

TI ETIS *descends ont the sta e*

Thetis O P leus! because of my wedded days w th thee now long agone I Thetis am com from the halls of Nereus And first I counsel thee not *to grieve* to excess in thy present distress, fo I too who *need* ne er ha born *children to my sorrow* ha e *lost* the child of our lo e, *Achilles sw ft of foot* foremost of the sons of H llas. Next will I declare why I am come and do thou gi e ear Carry yonder co pse Ach lles *son to* the Pythian altar and ther bury it a rep oach to Delphi that his tomb may procla m the iolent death he met at the hand of Orestes. *And* for his capti e wife Andromache—sh must dwell in the Molossian land un ted in honourable wedlock with Helenus, nd with her this babe, the *sol surv* or as he is of all the line of Æacus, for from him a s ccession of prospe ous kings of Molos *sia is* to go on unbroke so the race that springs from thee and me, my aged lord mu t not thus be brought to naught nor nor T o s line either for her fate too is cared for by th gods, lbe t her fall was due to the eager wish of Pallas. Thee too, that thou mayst know the sa ng gr ce of wedd *ng me* will I a goddess born and dau *hter of a god* r lease from all the ills that flesh is heir t and make a deity to know not death nor decay F om hencef rth in the halls of Ne eus shalt thou dwell w th *me* god and goddess togethe th nce shalt thou rise dry shod *from* out the ma n and see Achilles, ou dear son, settled in his isla d home by the strand of Leuce, that is girdled by the Euxin sea But get the to Delphi god b *ilt town carrying* this corpse with thee and afte thou hast buried him, retu n and settl n the ca e wh ch time hath hollowed n th Sepia ock a d thet abid till from the sea I come w th chor of fifty *Nereid to be* th esc t *thence for fate s decree thou must fulfil* such is the pleasure of *Zeus.* Cease th n to mo rn the dead this is th lot wh ch hea en assigns to all and all mu t pay their debt to death.

P G eat queen, my *honou* ed wife, from Nereus sprung all hail! thou a t act ng h rein as befits th self and thy *hildren* So I will stay my grief at thy b dding *goddess, and,* when I ha e buried th dead, will seek the glens of Pelion, e en th pla e where I

took thy beauteous form to my embrace (*Exit* THETIS.) Surely after this every prudent man will seek to marry a wife of noble stock and give his daughter to a husband good and true never setting his heart on a worthless woman not even though she bring a sumptuous dowry to his house So would men ne er suffer ill at heaven s hand

Ch Many are the shapes of Heaven s denizens, and many a thing they bring to pass contrary to our expectation that which we thought would be is not accomplished while for the unexpected God finds out a way E en such hath been the issue of this matter

Exeunt OMNES.

r43 43-8

ELECTRA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PEASANT *of Mycenae*
ELECTRA
ORESTES
CHORUS OF ARGIVE COUNTRY WOMEN
CLYTEMNESTRA
OLD MAN
MESSENGER
THE DIOSCURI
MUTE PYLADES

On the borders of Argolis. Enter Peasant.

Peasant. O Argos, ancient land, and streams of Inachus, whence on a day king Agamemnon sailed to the realm of Troy, carrying his warriors aboard a thousand ships; and after he had slain Priam who was reigning in Ilium and captured the famous city of Dardanus, he came hither to Argos and has set up high on the temple walls many a trophy, spoil of the barbarians. Though all went well with him in Troy, yet was he slain in his own palace by the guile of his wife Clytaemnestra and the hand of Aegisthus, son of Thyestes. So he died and left behind him the ancient sceptre of Tantalus, and Aegisthus reigns in his stead, with the daughter of Tyndareus, Agamemnon's queen, to wife. Now as for those whom he left in his halls, when he sailed to Troy, his son Orestes and his tender daughter Electra,—the boy Orestes, as he was like to be slain by Aegisthus, his sire's old foster-father secretly removed to the land of Phocis and gave to Strophius to bring up, but the maid Electra abode in her father's house, and soon as she had budded into maidenhood, came all the princes of Hellas asking her hand in marriage. But Aegisthus kept her at home for fear she might bear a son to some chieftain who would avenge Agamemnon, nor would he betroth her unto any. But when e'en thus there seemed some room for fear that she might bear some noble lord a child by stealth and Aegisthus was minded to slay her, her mother, though she had a cruel heart, yet rescued the maiden from his hand. For she could find excuses for having slain her husband, but she feared the hatred she would incur for her children's murder. Wherefore Aegisthus devised this scheme; on Agamemnon's son who had escaped his realm by flight he set a price to be paid to any who should slay him, while he gave Electra to me in marriage, whose ancestors were citizens of Mycenae. It is not that I blame myself for that; my family was noble enough, though certainly impoverished, and so my good birth suffers. By making for her this weak alliance he thought he would have little to fear. For if some man of high position had married her, he might have revived the vengeance for Agamemnon's murder, which now is sleeping; in which case Aegisthus would have paid the penalty. But Cypris is my witness that I have ever respected her maidenhood; she is still as though unwed. Unworthy as I am, honour forbids that I should so affront the daughter of a better man. Yea, and I am sorry for Orestes, hapless youth, who is called my kinsman, to think that he should ever return to Argos and behold his sister's wretched marriage. And whoso counts me but a fool for leaving a tender maid untouched when I have her in my house, to him I say, he measures purity by the vicious standard of his own soul, a standard like himself.

Enter ELECTRA.

Electra. O sable night, nurse of the golden stars! beneath thy pall I go to fetch water from the brook with my pitcher poised upon my head, not indeed because I am reduced to this necessity, but that to the gods I may display the affronts Aegisthus puts upon me, and to the wide firmament pour out my lamentation for my sire. For my own mother, the baleful daughter of Tyndareus, hath cast me forth from her house to gratify her lord; for since she hath born no other children to Aegisthus she puts me and Orestes on one side at home.

Pe. Oh! why, poor maiden, dost thou toil so hard on my behalf, thou that aforetime wert reared so daintily? why canst thou not forego thy labour, as I bid thee?

El. As a god I count thy kindness to me, for in my distress thou hast never made a mock at me. 'Tis rare fortune when mortals find such healing balm for their cruel wounds as 'tis my lot to find in thee. Wherefore I ought, though thou forbid me, to lighten thy labours, as far as my strength allows, and share all burdens with thee to ease thy load. Thou hast enough to do abroad; 'tis only right that I should keep thy house in order. For when the toiler cometh to his home from the field, it is pleasant to find all comfortable in the house.

Pe. If such thy pleasure, go thy way; for, after all, the spring is no great distance from my house. And at break of day I will drive my steers to my glebe and sow my crop. For no idler, though he has the gods' names ever on his lips, can gather a livelihood without hard work.

Exeunt PEASANT *and* ELECTRA.

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

Orestes. Ah! Pylades, I put thee first 'mongst men

for thy love thy loyalty and friendliness to me for thou alone of all my friends wouldst still honour poor Orestes in spite of the grievous plight whereto I am reduced by Ægisthus who with my accursed mother s aid slew my sire I am come from Apollo s mystic shrine to the soil of Argos without the knowledge of any to avenge my father s death upon his murderers Last night I went unto his tomb and wept thereon cutting off my hair as an offering and pouring o er the grave the blood of a sheep for sacrifice unmarked by those who lord it o er this land And now though I enter not the walled town yet by coming to the borders of the land I combine two objects I can escape to another country if any spy me out and recognize me and at the same time seek my sister for I am told she is a maid no longer but is married and living here that I may meet her and after enlisting her aid in the deed of blood learn for certain what is happening in the town Let us now since dawn is uplifting her radiant eye step aside from this path For maybe some labouring man or serving maid will come in sight of whom we may inquire whether it is here that my sister hath her home. Lo! yonder I see a servant bearing a full pitcher of water on her shaven head let us sit down and make inquiry of this bondmaid if haply we may glean some tidings of the matter which brought us hither Pylades *(They retire a little)*

Re enter ELECTRA

El Bestir thy lagging feet tis high time on on o er thy path of tears! ah misery! I am Agamemnon s daughter she whom Clytæmnestra hateful child of Tyndareus bare hapless Electra is the name my countrymen call me Ah me! for my cruel lot my hateful existence! O my father Agamemnon! in Hades art thou laid butchered by thy wife and Ægisthus Come raise with me that dirge once more uplift the woful strain that brings relief On on o er thy path of tears! ah misery! And thou poor brother in what city and house art thou a slave leaving thy suffering sister behind in the halls of our fathers to drain the cup of bitterness? Oh! come great Zeus to set me free from this life of sorrow and to aveng my sire in the blood of his foes bringing the wanderer home to Argos

Take this pitcher from my head put it down that I may wake betimes while it is yet night my lamentation for my sire my doleful chant my dirge of death, for thee my father in thy grave which day by day I do rehearse rending my skin with my nails and smiting on my shaven head in mourning for thy death Woe woe! rend the cheek like a swan with clear loud note beside the brimming river calling to its parent dear that lies a dying in the meshes of the crafty net so I bewail thee my hapless sire after that fatal bath of thine laid out most piteously in death

Oh! the horror of that axe which hacked thee so cruelly my sire! oh! the bitter thought that prompted thy return from Troy! With no garlands or victor s crowns did thy wife welcome thee but with his two-edged sword she made thee the sad sport of Ægisthus and kept her treacherous paramour

Enter CHORUS OF ARGIVE COUNTRY WOMEN

Chorus O Electra daughter of Agamemnon to thy rustic cot I come for a messen er hath arrived a highlander from Mycenæ one who lives on milk announcing that the Argives are proclaimin a sacrifice for the third day from now and all our maidens are to go to Hera s temple

El Kind friends my heart is not set on festivity nor do necklaces of gold cause any flutter in my sorrowing bosom nor will I stand up with the maidens of Argos to beat my foot in the mazy dance Tears have been my meat day and night ah misery! See my unkempt hair my tattered dress are they fit for a princess a daughter of Agamemnon or for Troy which once thought of my father as its captor?

Ch Mighty is the goddess so come and borrow of me broidered robes for apparel and jewels of gold that add a further grace to beauty s charms Dost think to triumph o er thy foes by tears if thou honour not the gods? Tis not by lamentation but by pious prayers to heaven that thou my daughter wilt make fortune smile on thee

El No god hearkens to the voice of lost Electra or heeds the sacrifices offered by my father long ago Ah woe for the dead! woe for the living wanderer who dwelleth in some foreign land an outcast and a vagabond at a menial board sprung though he is of a famous sire! Myself too in a poor man s hut do dwell wasting my soul with grief an exile from my father s halls here by the scarred hill side while my mother is wedded to a new husband in a marriage stained by blood

Ch Many a woe to Hellas and thy house did Helen thy mother s sister cause

El Ha! *(Catching sight of* ORESTES *and* PYLADES) Friends I break off my lament yonder are strangers just leaving the place of ambush where they were couching and making for the house We must seek to escape the villains by flying thou along the path and I into my cottage

Or Stay poor maid fear no violence from me

El O Phœbus Apollo! I beseech thee spare my life

Or Give me the lives of others more my foes than thou!

El Begone! touch me not! thou hast no right to.

Or There is none I have better right to touch

El How is it then thou waylayest me sword in hand near my house?

Or Wait and hear and thou wilt soon agree with me

El Here I stand I am in thy power in any case since thou art the stronger

Or I am come to thee with news of thy brother

El O best of friends! is he alive or dead?

Or Alive I would fain give thee my good news first

El God bless thee! in return for thy welcome tidings

Or I am prepared to share that blessing between us.

El. In what land is my poor br ther spending his dreary ex le?

Or His ruined life does not conf rm to the cus toms of any one ty

El. S rely h does n t want for da ly bread?

Or Bread he has, but an exile s a h lpless man at best

El What is this messag th u ha t brou ht from him?

Or He a ks, Art thou ali e and f so, H w rt thou far g?"

El Well first thou seest how haggard I am grown

Or So wasted w th so row that I weep for thee.

El Next ma k m head shorn and sha en like a Scythia s.

Or Thy brother s fate and father s death no doubt d stress thee.

El. Yes, ala ! f r what ha e I more dear than these?

Or Ah! and what dost thou suppose is dearer to th brother?

El He is far away not h r t show his lo to me

Or Wher for rt thou li in here far from the c ?

El I am wedded sir fatal match!

Or Alas! f r thy b other I pity him. Is thy hus band f My enæ?

El He is t th man to whom my fathe ever thought f betr thin me.

Or T ll m all, that I may epo t it to thy b other

El I l a art from m husband in this house.

Or Th nl fit t mat would be a hind or herd

El Poor he is, et he d plays a ge rous con sid tion for me.

Or Wh what is this on ideration that atta hes t th h band?

El H ha e r presumed to claim from me a h band h

Or I h unde a ow I ha t o does he d sdai thee?

El He thought h had no right to flout my a cestry

Or How was it h was not e j ed at wi nin uch bride?

El H does not ecom the ri ht of him who d posed f m band

Or I nd rst nd h wa fr id f the e geance f Ores es he eaft

El Ther was that fea b t h was a virtuou ma ll

Or Ah! nobl nature th H deserves kind treatm t

El Yes, f r the wanderer return.

Or B did th ow m th g int thu ?

El T h h sband not he hildr that a woman k es, tra ger

Or Wh ef d I Eg thus put this affront on thee?

El H des g m t such a h band was t takes m off m

Or T prev nt hee bear g sons I suppose, who would puni h him

El That was his plan God grant I may avenge me on him for t!

Or Does thy mother s husband know that thou art yet a ma d?

El He does not our silence robs him of that k owled e

Or Are these women friends of thine ho over hear our tal ?

El The ar and th ey will keep our con ersation perfectly secr t

Or What could Orestes do in this matter if he did r turn?

El Canst thou ask? Shame on thee for that! Is not thi th time for action?

Or But s ppose h comes, how could he slay his father s murderers?

El By boldly m ting out the same fate that his fathe had meted out to h m by his foes.

Or W uldst thou be bra e enou h to h lp him slay his moth r?

El A e with the self same axe that drank my father s blood

Or Am I to tell him this, and that thy purpose firml holds?

El Once I ha e shed my mother's blood o er his then w lcome death!

Or Ah! would Orestes were standing near to hear that!

El I sh uld not know him sir if I saw h m

Or wonder you we e both children when you pa ted

El The e is only one of my friends would reco nize him

Or The man may be who is sa d to ha e snatched him away fr m bein murdered?

El Yes, the old serv nt who tended my father s childhood l ng ago

Or Did thy fathe s corpse obta n burial?

El S ch burial as it was, after his body had been flu g f rth f om the palace

Or O God! how awful is thy sto y! Yes, th re is feeling aris g ev n from a th r s distress, that wri gs the human heart Say n that when I know the lo less tale which y t I needs must hear I may carry it to thy b ther F r pity thou h t has no place clown h natu es, is bo n in the wise still it may cause misch ef to find excessi e cle rness m gst the w se

Ch I too am n mated by th sam desire s the stran e For dwell so f r fr m the city I know nothing f the town s sca dals, nd I hould like to hear bo t them now m self.

El I will tell you f I may and su ely I may tell a fr end bout my own and my f th r s grie ous m f tunes. Now nce thou m vest m to speak I ent eat thee r tell Orestes of our sorrow First descr be th d es I wear the loa l of squalo that presses m the ho el I inhab t fter my ro al home tell h m how ha d I ha to w k at wea ng clothes m self r lse g barely lad and do w thout how I carry home on my head wat from the b ook no part have I in holy fest val, no pla e amid the

for thy love thy loyalty and friendliness to me for thou alone of all my friends wouldst still honour poor Orestes in spite of the grievous plight whereto I am reduced by Ægisthus who with my accursed mother s aid slew my sire I am come from Apollo s mystic shrine to the soil of Argos without the knowledge of any to avenge my father s death upon his murderers Last night I went unto his tomb and wept thereon cutting off my hair as an offering and pouring o er the grave the blood of a sheep for sacrifice unmarked by those who lord it o er this land And now though I enter not the walled town yet by coming to the borders of the land I combine two objects I can escape to another country if any spy me out and recognize me and at the same time seek my sister for I am told she is a maid no longer but is married and living here that I may meet her and after enlisting her aid in the deed of blood learn for certain what is happening in the town Let us now since dawn is uplifting her radiant eye step aside from this path For maybe some labouring man or serving maid will come in sight of whom we may inquire whether it is here that my sister hath her home Lo! yonder I see a servant bearing a full pitcher of water on her shaven head let us sit down and make inquiry of this bondmaid if haply we may glean some tidings of the matter which brought us hither Pylades (*They retire a little*)

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El God bless thee! in return for thy welcome tidings

Or I am prepared to share that blessing between us.

Pe I will take this message to the old man if it seem good to thee but g t thee in at o e and there make ready A w ma when she hooses, can find dai t es in plenty to garn h a feast Bes des, there is qu te en u h in the house to sat f them with ictuals f r ne day at lea t 'T s n such cases hen I come to muse there n that I d scern the m ghty pow r of wealth whether to g e to str s, or to expend n curing the bod when it fal s k but ou daily food is a mall matte f r all of u rich w ll as poor are in like case as soon a we ar sat fied

Exet t EL CTR a d E S NT

Ch Ye famou h ps, that on a day r b ou ht to land at Tr y by those countless oar what time e led th Nereid da c wh re the d lph n m sic f n r ll d and g mboll d rou d your dusky p rescorting Achilles n mble on of Thet s hen he w nt w th Agamemnon t th bank of T y n S mo when Ner ds left E boea s strand brin in f om H phaestu g ld n fo g the ha nes he h d fa h n d f r that war r se h m l ng th s ought er P l on and Ossa s spu s, ran ng the sa red gl ns and the pe k f N mpha a where his knightl re was tra n ng-up a l ght for H llas, the se bo n son f Thetis, a warrior sw ft t h lp the so f At us

On that came f m Il m and set foot in the ha n of N plia told me that on the circle of thy fa famed ta ge O son of Thetis, wa wr ught this blazo t r to th Phrygia s on the rim f the b kl r Pe seus with wi ged sandals, was be ri g h ha d c oss th main th Go g n s h ad just se ered b the aid of Hermes the messe ger of Zeus, that rur l god b m M bo e wh le n th c ntr f the h ld th n b ht b fla h d l ght the backs f h wi ged o t rs the too was th hea e l chor f stars, Pl iades and H ades, t dazzl Hect r es nd mak him flee and upon h g ld f ged h lm w sphin es, bear g n their tal n th p y of h h the mun tr ls ng n his b ea t plat wa l oness breathing flam her e e pon Peire e teed ageerness to nd it Th e to t m d r f f u footed teeds were pranc g h le r th b cks p osed d k loud f d t B t h wh led these wa to r wa sla b edd ng thee mal g ant ch ld f Tynd reu ! Wh ef r hall th god f hea en o e d y send thee t thy doom a d I hall y t h e to see the word t th th oat dr k g t crimson tid

En er OLD

Old M n Wh is the yo ng princ s, my m s- Ag m m d ght wh m I nursed n d gon b Oh! how teep s th approa h to th s house ha d cl mb t r these ld a ted feet f m Still t rea h ch friend a these I m t d m be old ba k a d t tte g k ees up it Ah da gh r f I see th e at th s doo —lo! I ha b ght thee th tend r lamb from m ow fl k ha g t ken from t dam, w th g lands

too and cheese straight from the press, and th s flask of cho ce old v ne v ith fra rant bouquet tis small perhaps, but pour a cup thereof i to some weak r dri k and t is a lusc ous draught Let some or e carry these g fts into th house for the guests for I would fain wipe from my e es the rising tears on this tattered cloak

El Why stands the tear-drop in th ne eye old f i nd? Is it that my sorro s ha e been recalled to th e after an interval? or art thou bewailing the sad ex le of Orestes, and my fathe s fate, hom thou d d t once f ndle in thy arms, in va n alas! for thee and for thy friend ?

O M Ah yes! in vain but still I could not bear to lea h m thus and so I added this to my jou n y that I so ght h s gra e and falling thereu pon wept o er it desolat on then did I open the wine skin my g ft to thy guests, and pou ed a l bation and set myrtle sprigs round the tomb And lo! upon the gra e itself I saw a black ram had be n offered and there was blood not l ng poured forth and se ered locks of auburn hair Much I wonde ed my daugh te who had dared approach the tomb certa nly twas no Arg ve N y th brother may perchance hav come by stealth and going thither have done honour to h s father s wretched gr ve Look at the hair co npare t w th thy own to see if the col ur of these cut locks is the sam for childr n in whose eins runs the same fath r s blood ha e usually a close bod ly resemblance in most po nts.

El Old sir thy words are unw rthy of a wise man f th u thinkest my own brave brother would ha e come to this land b stealth f r fear of Ægis thus. In the next place how should our hair cor e spond? His is the hair of a galla t youth tra ned up in manly sports, mi a w man s cu led and combed nay that s hopeless clue Besides thou c uldst fi d many whose ha r is of the same ol u albeit not prung f om th same blood No may be twas some tr nger cut off his ha r n pit at h s tomb r ne that cam t spy this land pri il

O M P t thy foot in the print of his shoe and ma k wh th r it c rrespond ith thi e, my child

El How h uld the foot make any mpres on on stony g ou d? and f it did the foot of brother and siste wou ld not l e th same in s ze for a man s i th larger

O M Ha t thou no mark, in ase thy brother sho ld come wher by to r cog ze the weaving of thy loom the robe wher in I sn tched h m fr m death that day?

El Dost th u f get I was st ll a babe hen Ores- tes l ft the co ntry? nd ev n if I ha l wo en him robe how hould he mere l ild then be ear ing the sam n w unless our clothes and bodies grow tog ther?

O M Whe e are these guests I fain would q es t on th m face to face abo t thy b oth

El Th e they are, in haste to lea e the hou e

Enter OR TES nd PYL DES

O M Wellborn t seems but that may be a

a ca y g ff man.

dance a maiden still I turn from married dames and from Castor too to whom they betrothed me before he joined the heavenly host for I was his kinswoman Meantime my mother mid the spoils of Troy is seated on her throne and at her footstool slaves from Asia stand and wait captives of my father s spear whose Trojan robes are fastened with brooches of gold And there on the wall my father s blood still leaves a deep dark stain while his murderer mounts the dead man s car and fareth forth proudly grasping in his blood stained hands the sceptre with which Agamemnon would marshal the sons of Hellas Dishonoured lies his grave naught as yet hath it received a drink outpoured or myrtle spray but bare of ornament his tomb is left Yea and tis said that noble hero who is wedded to my mother in his drunken fits doth leap upon the grave and pelt with stones my father s monument boldly gibing at us on this wise Where is thy son Orestes? Is he ever coming in his glory to defend thy tomb? Thus is Oreste flouted behind his back Oh! tell him this kind sir I pray thee And there be many calling him to come—I am but their mouthpiece—these suppliant hands this tongue my broken heart my shaven head and his own father too For tis shameful that the sire should have exterminated Troy s race and the son yet prove too weak to pit himself a ainst one foe unto the death albeit he has youth and better blood to boot

Ch Lo! here is thy husband hurrying homeward his day s work done

Pe (*Entering and catching sight of strangers talking to* ELECTRA) Ha! who are these stran ers I see at my door? And why are they come hither to my rustic gate? can they want my help? for tis unseemly for a woman to stand talking with young men

El Dear husband be not suspicious of me For thou shalt hear the truth these strangers have come to bring me news of Orestes Good sirs pardon him those words

Pe What say they? is that hero yet alive and in the light of day?

El He is at least they say so and I believe them

Pe Surely then he hath some memory of his father and thy wron s?

El These are things to hope for a man in exile is helpless

Pe What message have they brought from Orestes?

El He sent them to spy out my evil ca e

Pe Well they only see a part of it thou h may be thou art tellin them the rest

El They know all there is nothing further they need ask

Pe Long ere this then shouldst thou have thrown open our doors to them Enter sirs for in return for your good tidings shall ye find such cheer as my hou e affords Ho! servants take their baggage within make no excuses for ye are frien ! sent by one I love and poor though I am yet will I never show m anness in my habits

Or Fore heaven! is this the man who is helping thee to frustrate thy marriage because he will not shame Orestes?

El This is he whom they call my husband woe is me!

Or Ah! there is no sure mark to reco nize a man s worth for human nature hath in it an element of confusion For instance I have seen ere now the son of a noble sire prove himself a worthless knave and virtuous children sprung from evil parents likewis dearth in a rich man s spirit and in a poor man s frame a mighty soul By what standard then shall we rightly judge th e things? By wealth? An evil test to use By poverty then? Nay poverty suffers from this that it teaches a man to play the villain from necessity To martial prowess must I turn? But who could pronounce who is the valiant man merely from the look of his spear? Better is it to leave these matters to themselves without troubling For here is a man of no account in Argos, with no family reputation to boast one of the common herd proved a very hero A truce to your folly! ye self deceivers swollen with idle fancies learn to judge men by their converse and by their habits de ide who are noble Su h are they who rule aright both states and families while those forms of flesh devoid of intellect are but figure heads in the market place The strong arm again no more than the weak awaits the battle shock for this depends on natural courage Well! absent or present Agamemnon s son whose business brings us here deserves this of us so let us accept a lodging in this house (*Calling to his servants*) Ho! sirrahs, go within A humble host who does his best in preference to a wealthy man for me! And so I thankfully accept this peasant s proffered welcome thou h I could have preferred that thy brother were conductin me to share his fortune in his halls Maybe he yet will come for the oracles of Loxias are sure but to man s divining Farewell say I

Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Ch Electra I feel a warmer glow of joy suffu e my heart than ever heretofore perchance our fortune moving on at last will find a happy restin place

El O reckless man why didst thou welcome strangers like these so far b yond thy station knowing the poverty of thy house?

Pe Why? if they are really as noble as they seem surely they will be equally content with rich or humble fare

El Well since thou hast made this error poor man as thou art go to my father s kind old foster sire on the bank of the river Tanaus the boundary twixt Arges and the land of Sparta he tend h s flocks an outcast from the city bid him come hither to our house and make some provision for the strangers entertainment Glad will he be and will offer thanks to heaven to hear that the child whom once he saved is yet alive I shall get nothing from my mother from my ancestral halls for we should rue our message were she to learn unnatural wret h! that Orestes h eth

O. M. Yes, and when he sees thee there, he will invite thee to the feast.

Or. So help me God! He shall rue his invitation.

O. M. After that, form thy own plan according to circumstances.

Or. Good advice! But my mother, where is she?

O. M. At Argos; but she will yet join her husband for the feast.

Or. Why did she not come forth with him?

O. M. From fear of the citizens' reproach she stayed behind.

Or. I understand; she knows that the city suspects her.

O. M. Just so; her wickedness makes her hated.

Or. How shall I slay her and him together?

El. Mine be the preparation of my mother's slaying!

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El. Her death is certain, if she comes.

O. M. In that case let her come right up to the door of the house.

El. Why then it were a little thing to turn her steps into the road to Hades' halls.

O. M. Oh! to see this one day, then die!

El. First of all, old friend, act as my brother's guide.

O. M. To the place where Ægisthus is now sacrificing to the gods?

El. Then go, find my mother and give her my message.

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El. (*To* ORESTES) Thy work begins at once; thou hast drawn the first lot in the tragedy.

Or. I will go, if some one will show me the way.

O. M. I will myself conduct thee nothing loth.

Or. O Zeus, god of my fathers, vanquisher of my foes, have pity on us, for a piteous lot hath ours been.

El. Oh! have pity on thy own descendants.

Or. O Hera, mistress of Mycenae's altars, grant the victory [illegible] that [illegible] right.

El. [illegible] not [illegible] vengeance on them for our father's death.

Or. Thou too, my father, sent to the land of shades by wicked hands, and Earth the queen of all, to whom I spread my suppliant palms, up and champion thy dear children. Come with all the dead to aid, all they who helped thee break the Phrygians' power, and all who hate ungodly crime. Dost hear me, father, victim of my mother's rage?

El. Sure am I he heareth all; but 'tis time to part. For this cause too I bid thee strike Ægisthus down, because, if thou fall in the struggle and perish, I also die; no longer number me amongst the living; for I will stab myself with a two-edged sword. And now will I go indoors and make all ready there, for if there come good news from thee, my house shall ring with women's cries of joy; but, if thou art slain, a different scene must then ensue. These are my instructions to thee.

Or. I know my lesson well.

El. Then show thyself a man. (*Exeunt* ORESTES, PYLADES, *and* OLD MAN) And you, my friends, signal to me by cries the certain issue of this fray. Myself will keep the sword ready in my grasp, for I will never accept defeat, and yield my body to my enemies to insult. *Exit* ELECTRA

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Hark! my friends, did ye hear that noise, like to the rumbling of an earthquake, or am I the dupe of idle fancy? Hark! hark! once more that wind-borne sound swells loudly on mine ear. Electra! mistress mine! come forth from the house!

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Or All hail father! To which of thy friends Electra does this old relic of mortality belong?

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Or A man I love full well But why is he walking round me?

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O M My honoured mistress my daughter Electra return thanks to heaven—

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El Hear me invoke the gods But what dost thou mean old man?

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O M Slay Thyestes son and thy mother

Or I came to win that victor s crown but how can I attain it?

O M Thou wouldst never achieve it if thou didst enter the walls

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join in the dance; lift high the nimble foot and be glad. Victory crowns thy brother; he hath won a fairer wreath than ever victor gained beside the streams of Alpheus; so raise a fair hymn to victory, the while I dance.

El. O light of day! O bright careering sun! O earth! and night erewhile my only day! now may I open my eyes in freedom, for Aegisthus is dead, my father's murderer. Come friends, let me bring out whatever my house contains to deck his head and wreathe with crowns my conquering brother's brow.

Ch. Bring forth thy garlands for his head, and we will lead the dance the Muses love. Now shall the royal line, dear to us in days gone by, resume its sway o'er the realm, having laid low the usurper as he deserves. So let the shout go up, whose notes are those of joy.

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES, *with the corpse of* AEGISTHUS.

El. Hail! glorious victor Orestes, son of a sire who won the day beneath Ilium's walls, accept this wreath to bind about the tresses of thy hair. Not in vain hast thou run the course unto the goal and reached thy home again; no! but thou hast slain thy foe, Aegisthus, the murderer of our father. Thou too, O Pylades, trusty squire, whose training shows thy father's stainless worth, receive a garland from my hand, for thou no less than he hast a share in this emprise; and so I pray, good luck be thine for ever!

Or. First recognize the gods, Electra, as being the authors of our fortune, and then praise me their minister and fate's. Yea, I come from having slain Aegisthus in very deed, no mere pretence; and to make thee the more certain of this, I am bringing thee his corpse, which, if thou wilt, expose for beasts to rend, or set it upon a stake for birds, the children of the air, to prey upon; for now is he thy slave, once called thy lord and master.

El. I am ashamed to utter my wishes.

Or. What is it? speak out, for thou art through the gates of fear.

El. I am ashamed to flout the dead, for fear some spite assail me.

Or. No one would blame thee for this.

El. Our folk are hard to please, and love scandal.

Or. Speak all thy mind, sister; for we entered on this feud with him on terms admitting not of truce.

El. Enough! (*Turning to the corpse of* AEGISTHUS) With which of thy iniquities shall I begin my recital? With which shall I end it? To which allot a middle place? And yet I never ceased, as each day dawned, to rehearse the story I would tell thee to thy face, if ever I were freed from my old terrors; and now I am; so I will pay thee back with the abuse I had in store for thee when alive. Thou wert my ruin, making me and my brother orphans, though we had never injured thee; thou didst make a shameful marriage with my mother, having slain her lord who led the host of Hellas, though thyself didst never go to Troy. Such was thy folly, thou didst never dream that my mother would prove thy curse when thou didst marry her, though thou wert wronging my father's honour. Know this; whoso defiles his neighbour's wife, and afterward is forced to take her to himself, is a wretched wight, if he supposes she will be chaste as his wife, though she sinned against her former lord. Thine was a life most miserable, though thou didst pretend 'twas otherwise; well thou knewest how guilty thy marriage was, and my mother knew she had a villain for her husband. Sinners both, ye took each other's lot, she thy fortune, thou her curse. While everywhere in Argos thou wouldst hear such phrases as, "that woman's husband," never "that man's wife." Yet 'tis shameful for the wife and not the man to rule the house; wherefore I loathe those children, who are called in the city not the sons of the man, their father, but of their mother. For instance, if a man makes a great match above his rank, there is no talk of the husband but only of the wife. Herein lay thy grievous error, due to ignorance; thou thoughtest thyself some one, relying on thy wealth, but this is naught save to stay with us a space. 'Tis nature that stands fast, not wealth. For it, if it abide unchanged, exalts man's horn; but riches dishonestly acquired and in the hands of fools, soon take their flight, their blossom quickly shed. As for thy sins with women, I pass them by, 'tis not for maiden's lips to mention them, but I will shrewdly hint thereat. And then thy arrogance! because forsooth thou hadst a palace and some looks to boast. May I never have a husband with a girl's face, but *one* that bears him like a man! For the children of these latter cling to a life of arms, while those, who are so fair to see, do only serve to grace the dance. Away from me! (*Spurning the corpse with her foot*) Time has shown thy villainy, little as thou reckest of the forfeit thou hast *paid* for it. Let none suppose, though he have run the first stage of his course with joy, that he will get the better of Justice, till he have reached the goal and ended his career.

Ch. Terrible alike his crime and your revenge; for mighty is the power of justice.

Or. 'Tis well. Carry his body within the house and hide it, sirrahs, that, when my mother comes, she may not see his corpse before she is smitten herself.

El. Hold! let us strike out another scheme.

Or. How now? Are those allies from *Mycenae* whom I see?

El. No, 'tis my mother, that bare me.

Or. Full into the net she is rushing, oh, bravely!

El. See how proudly she rides in her chariot and fine robes!

Or. What must we do to our mother? Slay her?

El. What! has pity seized thee at sight of her?

Or. O God! how can I slay her that bare and suckled me?

El. Slay her as she slew thy father and mine.

Or. O Phoebus, how foolish was thy oracle—

El. Where Apollo errs, who shall be wise?

Or. In bidding me commit this crime—my mother's murder!

El What is it good friends? how goes the day with us?

Ch I hear the cries of dying men no more I know

El I heard them too far off but still distinct

Ch Yes the sound came stealing from afar but yet twas clear

El Was it the groan of an Argive or of my friends?

Ch I know not for the cries are all confused

El That word of thine is my death warrant why do I delay?

Ch Stay till thou learn thy fate for certain

El No no we are vanquished where are our messengers?

Ch They will come in time to slay a king is no light task

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger All hail! ye victors maidens of Mycenæ to all Orestes friends his triumph I announce Ægisthus the murderer of Agamemnon lies weltering where he fell return thanks to heaven

El Who art thou? What proof dost thou give of this?

Me Look at me dost thou not recognize thy brother s servant?

El O best of friends! twas fear that prevented me from recognizing thee now I know thee well What sayst thou? Is my father s hateful murderer slain?

Me He is I repeat it since it is thy wish

Ch Ye gods and Justice whose eye is on all at last art thou come

El I fain would learn the way and means my brother took to slay Thyestes son

Me After we had set out from this house we struck into the broad high road and came to the place where was the far famed King of Mycenæ Now he was walking in a garden well watered culling a wreath of tender myrtle sprays for his head and when he saw us he called out All hail! strangers who are ye? whence come ye? from what country? To him Orestes answered We are from Thessaly on our way to Alpheus banks to sacrifice to Olympian Zeus When Ægisthus heard that he said Ye must be my guests to day and share the feast for I am even now sacrificing to the Nymphs and by rising with tomorrow s light ye will be just as far upon your journey now let us go within Therewith he caught us by the hand and led us by the way refuse we could not and when we were come to the house he gave command Bring water for my guests to wash forthwith that they may stand around the altar near the laver But Orestes answered Twas but now we purified ourselves and washed us clean in water from the river So if we strangers are to join your citizens in sacrifice we are ready King Ægisthus and will not refuse So ended they their private conference Meantime the servants that composed their master s bodyguard laid aside their weapons and one and all were busied at their tasks Some brought the bowl to catch the blood others took up baskets while others kindled fire and set cauldrons round about the altars and the whole house rang Then did thy mother s husband take the barley for sprinkling and began casting it upon the hearth with these words Ye Nymphs who dwell among the rocks grant that I may often sacrifice with my wife the daughter of Tyndareus within my halls as happily as now and ruin seize my foes! (whereby he meant Orestes and thyself) But my master lowering his voice offered a different prayer that he might regain his father s house Next Ægisthus took from a basket a long straight knife and cutting off some of the calf s hair laid it with his right hand on the sacred fire and then cut its throat when the servants had lifted it upon their shoulders and thus addressed thy brother Men declare that amongst the Thessalians this is counted honourable to cut up a bull neatly and to manage steeds So take the knife sir stranger and show us if rumour speaks true about the Thessalians Thereon Orestes seized the Dorian knife of tempered steel and cast from his shoulders his graceful buckled robe then choosing Pylades to help him in his task he made the servants withdraw and catching the calf by the hoof proceeded to lay bare its white flesh with arm outstretched and he flayed the hide quicker than a runner ever finishes the two laps of the horses race course next he laid the belly open and Ægisthus took the entrails in his hands and carefully examined them Now the liver had no lobe while the portal vein leading to the gall bladder portended a dangerous attack on him who was observing it Dark grows Ægisthus brow but my master asks Why so despondent good sir? Said he I fear treachery from a stranger Agamemnon s son of all men most I hate and he hates my house But Orestes cried What! fear treachery from an exile! thou the ruler of the city? Ho! take this Dorian knife away and bring me a Thessalian cleaver that we by sacrificial feast may learn the will of heaven let me cleave the breast bone And he took the axe and cut it through Now Ægisthus was examining the entrails separating them in his hands and as he was bending down thy brother rose on tiptoe and smote him on the spine severing the vertebræ of his back and his body gave one convulsive shudder from head to foot and writhed in the death agony No sooner did his servants see it than they rushed to arms a host to fight with two yet did Pylades and Orestes of their valiancy meet them with brandished spears Then cried Orestes I am no foe that come against this city and my own servants but I have avenged me on the murderer of my sire I ill starred Orestes Slay me not my father s former thralls! They when they heard him speak restrained their spears and an old man who had been in the family many a long year recognized him Forthwith they crown thy brother with a wreath and utter shouts of joy And lo! he is coming to show thee the head not the Gorgon s but the head of thy hated foe Ægisthus his death to-day has paid in blood a bitter debt of blood

Ch Dear mistress now with step as light as fawn

to virtue. If, as thou allegest my father slew thy dau hter what is the wron I and my brother ha e done thee? How was t thou didst not bestow on us our father's halls after thy husband s death instead of bartering them to buy a paramour? Again, thy husband is not exiled f r thy son s sake nor is he slain to a enge my death, althou h by him this life is quenched tw ce as much as e er my siste s was so if murder is to su ceed murder in requital, I and thy son Orestes must lay thee to a en e our father if that was just wh so i this. Whoso fi es his gaze on wealth or noble birth and weds a wicked woman, is a fool better is a humble partner in his home, if she be irtuous, than a p oud one.

Ch. Chance rules the marriages of women some I see turn out well, others ill amongst mankind.

Cl Daughter twas e er thy nature to lo e thy fath r This too one finds some sons ling t their father others ha e a deeper affection for their mother I wil forg e thee for myself am not so exceeding glad at the deed that I ha e done my child

But thou—why thus unwashed and clad in foul attire, now that the days of thy lying in ar ac complished? Ah me for my sorry schemes! I ha e goaded my h band int anger more than e er I should ha e done.

El Thy sorrow comes too late the hour of remedy ha gone from thee m father is dead Yet why not recall that exil thy own wandering son?

Cl I am fraid tis m interest not his that I r gard For they say he is wroth for his father s murder

El Why then dost thou encourage thy husband s bitt ness against ?

Cl 'Tis his way thou too hast a st bborn nature.

El Because I am grie ed yet will I check my spirit

Cl I promise then he hall no lon er oppress thee

El F om li ing in my home h grows too proud

Cl Now there! tis thou that art fanning the quarrel int new life

El I say no more my dread of him is e en what t is.

Cl Peace! Enough of this. Why didst thou sum mon me my ch ld?

El Thou hast heard I suppose of my confine ment for thi I pr y thee since I know not how offer the cu tomary sacrifi on th tenth day after bi th for I m o ce h em e r ha ing had a hild before

Cl Thi is work for another even for her who d li ed thee.

El I a all alone in my tra ail and at the babe s birth

Cl Dost h so la from eighbours?

El N one ca es t mak the poor his friends.

Cl W ll, I wil go t off o the god a sacrific for he hild compl tion f th da s and wh n I ha done thee this servic I will seek the fi ld h m husband is sa ificing t the Nymphs. T k this chariot hence, my serva ts, nd ti th horses t the stall and when ye think that I ha finished my offerin to the gods, attend me, for I must l kewise pleasure my f id

Going nto the house

El Enter our humble cotta but p thee, take care that my smoke grimed walls soil not thy robes now wilt thou ffer to the gods a fitting sacrifice There stands the basket r ady and the knife is sha pened the same that slew the b ll, by whose sid thou soon wilt lie a corpse and thou shalt be his bride in Hades halls whose w fe thou wast on earth This is the boon I will grant thee while thou shalt pay me for my father s blood *Exit* ELECTRA.

Ch Misery is changing sides the breeze veers round and now blows fair upon my house The day is past when my chief f ll murd red in his bath and the roof and the very st nes of the walls ran with his cry "O cruel wife why art thou mu der n me on my return to my dear country after ten long years?"

The tide is turnin and justice that pursues the fa thless wif is drawi g within ts grasp the mur deress, who slew her hapless lo d when he cam hom at last to th se towerin Cyclopean walls—aye with her own hand she smote him w th the sharpened steel herself th ax uplift n Unhappy husband! whate er the curse that possessed that wretched woma Like a lioness of the hills that ran eth through the woodland f r her prey she wrought the deed

Cl (*Within*) O my children by Hea en I pray e spar your mothe !

Ch Dost hea her cries within the house?

Cl O God! h m !

Ch I too bewail thee, dying by thy children s hands. God deals out His justice in His good time. A cruel fate is thin unhappy one yet did t thou sin in murd rin th lord

B t lo! from th house they come dabbled in their mother s fresh spilt gore their t i mph prov ing the piteous butch ry Ther is not nor has e er been a ra e more wr tched than the line of Ta talus.

The two corpses are shown

Enter ORESTES *and* ELECTRA.

Or O Earth, and Zeu whose eye i er all! be hold this foul deed of blood these two corpses lyi g here that I hav slain in engeanc for my s fferings.[1]

El Tears all too weak for this, brother and I m the guilty cause Ah, woe is m ! How hot my fury burned against the mother that bare me!

Or Ala ! f thy lot O moth r mine! A p teous, piteous doom, aye, w rse tha that hast thou in curred at children s hands! Yet justly ha t thou paid forfeit for ou father s b ood Ah, Phoebu ! thine was the or e that praised this engeance thou t is that hast brou ht these hideous scenes to l ght and caused thi deed of blood To what city can I go hence forth? what friend what ma of any piety will bear the sight of a mother s murderer like me?

[1] Two erses have been lost here.

El How canst thou be hurt by avenging thy father?

Or Though pure before I now shall carry into exile the stain of a mother s blood

El Still if thou avenge not thy father thou wilt fail in thy duty

Or And if I slay my mother I must pay the penalty to her

El And so must thou to him if thou resign the avenging of our father

Or Surely it was a fiend in the likeness of the god that ordered this!

El Seated on the holy tripod? I think not so

Or I cannot believe this oracle was meant

El Turn not coward! Cast not thy manliness away!

Or Am I to devise the same crafty scheme for her?

El The self same death thou didst mete out to her lord Ægisthus

Or I will go in tis an awful task I undertake an awful deed I have to do still if it is Heaven s will be it so I loathe and yet I love the enterprise

ORESTES *withdraws into the house*

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA

Ch Hail! Queen of Argos daughter of Tyndareus sister of those two noble sons of Zeus who dwell in the flame lit firmament amid the stars whose guerdon high it is to save the sailor tossing on the sea All hail! because of thy wealth and high prosperity *I do thee homage as I do the blessed gods* Now is the time great queen for us to pay our court unto thy fortunes

Clytaemnestra Alight from the car ye Trojan *maids and take my hand that I may step down from* the chariot With Trojan spoils the temples of the gods are decked but I have obtained these maidens as a special gift from Troy in return for my lost daughter a trifling boon no doubt but still an ornament to my house

El And may not I mother take that highly favoured hand of thine? I am a slave like them an *exile from my father s halls in this miserable abode*

Cl See my servants are here trouble not on my account

El Why thou didst make me thy prisoner by robbing me of my home like these I became a captive when my home was taken an orphan all forlorn

Cl True but thy father plotted so wickedly against those of his own kin whom least of all he should have treated so Speak I must albeit when a woman gets an *evil reputation there is a feeling* of bitterness against all she says unfairly indeed in my case for it were only fair to hate after learning the circumstances and seeing if the object deserves it *otherwise* why hate at all? Now Tyndareus bestowed me on thy father not that I or any children I might bear should be slain Yet he went and took my daughter from our house to the fleet at Aulis persuading me that Achilles was to wed her and there he held her o er the pyre and cut *Iphigenia s* snowy throat Had he slain her to save his city from capture or to benefit his house or to preserve his *other children a sacrifice of one for many I could* have pardoned him But as it was his reasons for murdering my child were these the wantonness of Helen and her husband s folly in not punishing the traitress Still wronged as I was my rage had not burst forth for this nor would I have slain my lord had he not returned to me with that frenzied maiden and made her his mistress, keeping at once two brides beneath the same roof Women maybe are given to folly I do not deny it this granted, when a husband goes astray and sets aside his own true wife she fain will follow his example and find another love and then in our case hot abuse is heard, while the men who are to blame for this escape without a word Again suppose Menelaus had been secretly snatched from his home should I have had to kill Orestes to save Menelaus my sister s husband? How would thy father have endured this? Was he then to escape death for slaying what was mine while I was to suffer at his hands? I slew him turning as my only course to his enemies For which of all thy father s friends would have joined me in his murder? Speak all that is in thy heart and prove against me with all free speech that thy father s death was not deserved

El Justly urged! but thy justice is not *free from* shame for in all things should every woman of sense yield to her husband Whoso thinketh otherwise comes not within the scope of what I say Remember mother those last words of thine allowing *me* free utterance before thee

Cl Daughter far from refusing it *I grant it again*

El Thou wilt not when thou hearest wreak thy *vengeance on me?*

Cl No indeed I shall welcome thy opinion

El Then will I speak and this shall be the prelude of my speech Ah mother mine! would thou hadst had a better heart for though thy beauty and Helen s win you praises well deserved yet are ye akin in nature a pair of wantons unworthy of Castor *She* was carried off tis true but her fall was *voluntary and thou hast slain the bravest soul in* Hellas excusing thyself on the ground that thou didst kill a husband to avenge a daughter the world does not know thee so well as I do thou who before ever thy daughter s death was decided yea soon as thy *lord had started from his home* wert combing thy golden tresses at thy *mirror* That wife who when her lord is gone from home sets to beautifying herself strike off from virtue s list for she has *no need to carry her beauty abroad* save she is seeking some mischief Of all the wives in Hellas thou wert the only one I know who wert overjoyed when Troy s star was in the ascendant while if it set thy brow was clouded since thou hadst no wish that *Agamemnon should return from Troy* And yet thou *couldst* have played a virtuous part to thy own glory The husband thou hadst was *no whit inferior* to Ægisthus for he it was whom Hellas chose to be *her* captain And when thy sister Helen wrought that deed of shame thou couldst have won thyself great glory for vice is a warning and calls attention

Di. Ah me! that bitter cry makes even gods shudder to hear. Yea, for in my breast and in every heavenly being dwells pity for the sorrows of mankind.

Or. Never to see thee more!

El. Never again to stand within thy sight!

Or. This is my last good-bye to thee.

El. Farewell, farewell, my city! and ye my fellow-countrywomen, a long farewell to you!

Or. Art thou going already, truest of thy sex?

El. I go, the teardrop dimming my young eye.

Or. Go, Pylades, and be happy; take and wed Electra.

Di. Their only thoughts will be their marriage; but haste thee to Athens, seeking to escape these hounds of hell, for they are on thy track in fearful wise, swart monsters, with snakes for hands, who reap a harvest of man's agony. But we twain must haste away o'er the Sicilian main to save the seaman's ship. Yet as we fly through heaven's expanse we help not the wicked; but whoso in his life loves piety and justice, all such we free from troublous toils and save. Wherefore let no man be minded to act unjustly, or with men foresworn set sail; such the warning I, a god, to mortals give.

Ch. Farewell! truly that mortal's is a happy lot who can thus fare, unafflicted by any calamity.

Exeunt omnes.

El Ah me! alas! and whither can I go? What share have I henceforth in dance or marriage rite? What husband will accept me as his bride?

Or Again thy fancy changes with the wind for now thou thinkest aright though not so formerly an awful deed didst thou urge thy brother against his will to commit dear sister Oh! didst thou see how the poor victim threw open her robe and showed her bosom as I smote her sinking on her knees poor wretch? My heart melted within me

El Full well I know the agony through which thou didst pass at hearing thy own mother s bitter cry

Or Ah yes! she laid her hand upon my chin and cried aloud My child I entreat thee! and she clung about my neck so that I let fall the sword

El O my poor mother! How didst thou endure to see her breathe her last before thy eyes?

Or I threw my mantle o er them and began the sacrifice by plunging the sword into my mother s throat

El Yet twas I that urged thee on yea and likewise grasped the steel Oh! I have done an awful deed

Or Oh! take and hide our mother s corpse beneath a pall and close her gaping wound (*Turning to the corpse*) Ah! thy murderers were thine own children

El (*Covering the corpse*) There! thou corpse both loved and loathed still o er thee I cast a robe to end the grievous troubles of our house

(THE DIOSCURI *are seen hovering above the house*)

Ch See! where o er the roof top spirits are appearing or gods maybe from heaven for this is not a road that mortals tread Why come they thus where mortal eyes can see them clearly?

The Dioscuri Hearken son of Agamemnon We the twin sons of Zeus thy mother s brothers call thee even Castor and his brother Polydeuces Tis but now we have reached Argos after stilling the fury of the sea for mariners having seen the slaying of our sister thy mother She hath received her just reward but thine is no righteous act and Phœbus —but no! he is my king my lips are sealed—is Phœbus still albeit the oracle he gave thee was no great proof of his wisdom But we must acquiesce herein Henceforth must thou follow what Zeus and destiny ordain for thee On Pylades bestow Electra for his wife to take unto his home do thou leave Argos for after thy mother s murder thou mayst not set foot in the city And those grim goddesses of doom that glare like savage hounds will drive thee mad and chase thee to and fro but go thou to Athens and make thy prayer to the holy image of Pallas for she will close the r fierce serpents mouths so that they touch thee not holding o er thy head her ægis with the Gorgon s head A hill there is to Ares sacred where first the gods in conclave sat to decide the law of blood in the day that savage Ares slew Halirrothius son of the ocean king in anger for the violence he offered to his daughter s honour from that time all decisions given there are most holy and have heaven s sanction There must thou have this murder tried and if equal votes are given they shall save thee from death in the decision for Loxias will take the blame upon himself, since it was his oracle that advised thy mother s murder And this shall be the law for all posterity in every trial the accused shall win his case if the votes are equal Then shall those dread goddesses stricken with grief at this vanish into a cleft of the earth close to the hill revered by men thenceforth as a place for holy oracles whilst thou must settle in a city of Arcadia on the banks of the river Alpheus near the shrine of Lycæan Apollo and the city shall be called after thy name To thee I say this As for the corpse of Ægisthus the citizens of Argos must give it burial but Menelaus who has just arrived at Nauplia from the sack of Troy shall bury thy mother Helen helping him for she hath come from her sojourn in Egypt in the halls of Proteus and hath never been to Troy but Zeus to stir up strife and bloodshed in the world sent forth a phantom of Helen to Ilium Now let Pylades take his maiden wife and bear her to his home in Achæa also he must conduct thy so called kinsman to the land of Phocis and there reward him well But go thyself along the narrow Isthmus and seek Cecropia s happy home For once thou hast fulfilled the doom appointed for this murder thou shalt be blest and free from all thy troubles

Ch Ye sons of Zeus may we draw near to speak with you?

Di Ye may since ye are not polluted by this murder

Or May I too share your converse sons of Tyndareus?

Di Thou too for to Phœbus will I ascribe this deed of blood

Ch How was it that ye the brothers of the murdered woman gods too did not ward the doom goddesses from her roof?

Di 'Twas fate that brought resistless doom to her and that thoughtless oracle that Phœbus gave

El But why did the god and wherefore did his oracles make me my mother s murderer?

Di A share in the deed a share in its doom one ancestral curse hath ruined both of you

Or Ah sister mine! at last I see thee again only to be robbed in a moment of thy dear love I must leave thee and by thee be left

Di Hers are a husband and a home her only suffering this that she is quitting Argos

Or Yet what could call forth deeper grief than exile from one s fatherland? I must leave my father s house and at a stranger s bar be sentenced for my mother s blood

Di Be of good cheer go to the holy town of Pallas keep a stout heart only

El O my brother best and dearest! clasp me to thy breast for now is the curse of our mother s blood cutting us off from the home of our fathers.

Or Throw thy arms in close embrace about me Oh! weep as o er my grave when I am dead

And when the Fates had f lly formed the h rned god he b ou ht him forth nd crowned him with a coronal of snakes, whence it is the thyrsus-bearin Mænads hunt the snake to twine about their hair O Thebes, nurse of Semele! crown thyself w th ivy burst forth, burst f rth with blossoms fa r of green con ol ulus, a d with the boughs of oak and pine jo n in the Bacchic re elry don thy coat of dappled fa n kin decking it with tufts of sil ered hair with re erent hand the sport e wand now wield Anon shall the whole land be dancing when Brom ius leads his re llers to the hills, to th hills away! where wa t him groups of ma dens from looms and shuttle roused in frantic haste by Dionysus. O hid den ca e f the Curetes! O hallowed haunts in Crete that saw Zeus born whe Cory bantes with crested helms devised f r m in their grotto the ounded timbrel of ox hide min ling Bac hic minstrelsy w th th shrill eet accents of the Phrygia flute a gift bestowed by them on mother Rhea t add its crash of music to the Ba hantes shouts f joy b t frantic satyrs wo t from th m th r goddess for thei own and added it to the r d n es in festi als, which glad d nth heart f Dio ysus, each third recurre t year Oh! happy that otary when from the hurrying revel rout he si ks t earth in his holy robe of fawn k having the goat to drink t blood a banquet sweet f flesh ncooked as he hastes to Phrygia s or to Lyb a s h ll while i the an the Bromiu god exults with cr es of E oe W th milk nd w ne and streams of luscious honey flows the earth and Syrian ncense smokes. Wh le the B cchante hold ng in his hand a blazin t rch of pine uplifted on his wand wa es it a h speeds alo g rousi g wa ders g o- tanes, nd a he wa es t cries aloud with wa ton tresses tossi g in the breeze and thus to crown the rev lry he raises loud his oice O o ye Bac chanals, prid of Tmolus with ts ills of gold! to the sound f the booming drum ha ting n joyous stra the praises of your j yous god w th Phrygian acce t lifted high what time the holy lute with sweet complaining note tes you t your hallowed sport a cord ng well with feet that hurry wildly t the hills like colt that gambols t ts m thers side in the past w th gladsom heart each B cchante bounds along

Enter TEI E S

Teiresia What loite e at the gates will call Cad m s from the house Ag or s son who left th city f Sidon nd fou ded he th town of Thebes? Go on f you, ou t him that T resias is seek g h m he k ows h mself the reaso of my coming nd th compa t I nd he ha made in our old age t bind the th rsus w th lea es nd don th fawn skin, rown g our heads th while with i y-sprays.

Enter CADMUS.

Cadm Best f fri nd! I wa in th house when I heard thy oi w se a t w I come pre pa ed d essed n th l ery f th god For t s but ri ht I should mag f w th I my m ght my own da gh son Dionysus, who hath shown his god head u t men. Wh re re we to join the dance? where plant the foot and shake the hoary head? Do thou, Teiresias, be my guide age lead ng a e for thou art w se Ne er shall I weary night or day of beat ng the earth w th my thyrsus. What joy to forget our years?

Te Why then thou art as I am For I too am you g again and will essay the da ce

Ca We will dri e then in our chariot to the hill.

Te Nay thus would the god not have an equal honour paid

Ca Well I will lead thee age leading age.

Te The god will guide us both thither without toil

Ca Shall we alone of all the city dance in B c chus ho our?

Te Yea for we alone are wise the rest are mad

Ca We stay too long come take my hand

Te There! link thy ha d in my firm grip

Ca Mortal that I am I scorn not the gods.

Te No subtleties d I indul e about the powers of hea n The faith we inherited from our fathers old as t me itself no reasonin shall cast down n l though it were the s btlest in ent on of wits re fined May be some one will say I have no respect for my g ey hair in go ng to dance w th i y round my head not so, for the god d d not define whether old or young should dance but from all alike he claims a universal homage and scorns n ce calcula t o s i his worship

Ca Tei esias, since thou art blind I must prompt thee what to say Pentheus is coming h ther to the house in haste, Echion s son to whom I resign the g vernment How scared he looks! what strange tid ings will he tell?

Enter PENTHEUS

Pentheus I had left my k ngdom f r awhile when tid ngs of strange m sch f in this c ty rea hed me I hear that ur w men folk ha e l ft their homes n p etenc of B cchic rites, and on the wooded hills rush wildly to and fro, honouri g in the dance this new god D onysus, whoe er he is and in the m dst of each revel out the brimming wine bowl stands and one by one they steal way to l n ly spots to grat fy th ir lust pretending forsooth that they re Mænads bent on sac ifice tho gh it is Aphrod te they r placin before the Bacchic god As many as I ca ght my ga le a keepin saf n the publ c p son fast bound and all who r gone forth will I chase from the hills, In and Aga e too who bore me to Ech on and Actæon s m th r Autonoe In fett rs of iron will I b nd them and soon put an end to these outra eous Bacchic rites. They say there came a strange h th r trickst r and a sorcerer f m Lydia s land with golden hair and perfumed locks, the flush of wine upon his face a d in his eyes each grace that Aphrod te gives by day nd n ght h li gers in ou maidens company on the plea of teach g Bacchic mysteries. Onc I t me catch h m w th n these walls, nd I will put an end to his thyr us-beat g a d his wa i g of his t esses, f r I will cut his head from his body Th s is the fellow who says that D onysus s a god says that he

THE BACCHANTES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DIONYSUS	CADMUS
PENTHEUS	SERVANT
CHORUS OF BACCHANTES	FIRST MESSENGER
TEIRESIAS	SECOND MESSENGER
	AGAVE

Before the Palace of Pentheus at Thebes Enter DIONYSUS

Dionysus Lo! I am come to this land of Thebes Dionysus the son of Zeus of whom on a day Semele the daughter of Cadmus was delivered by a flash of lightning I have put off the god and taken human shape and so present myself at Dirce s springs and the waters of Ismenus Yonder I see my mother s monument where the bolt slew her nigh her house and there are the ruins of her home smouldering with the heavenly flame that blazeth still—Hera s deathless outrage on my mother To Cadmus all praise I offer because he keeps this spot hallowed his daughter s precinct which my own hands have shaded round about with the vine s clustering foliage

Lydia s glebes where gold abounds and Phrygia have I left behind o er Persia s sun baked plains by Bactria s walled towns and Media s wintry clime have I advanced through Arabia land of promise and Asia s length and breadth outstretched along the brackish sea with many a fair walled town peopled with mingled race of Hellenes and barbarians and this is the first city in Hellas I have reached There too have I ordained dances and established my rites that I might manifest my godhead to men but Thebes is the first city in the land of Hellas that I have made ring with shouts of joy girt in a fawn skin with a thyrsus my ivy bound spear in my hand since my mother s sisters who least of all should have done it denied that Dionysus was the son of Zeus saying that Semele when she became a mother by some mortal lover tried to foist her sin on Zeus—a clever ruse of Cadmus which they boldly asserted caused Zeus to slay her for the falsehood about the marriage Wherefore these are they whom I have driven frenzied from their homes and they are dwelling on the hills with mind distraught and I have forced them to assume the dress worn in my orgies and all the women folk of Cadmus stock have I driven raving from their homes one and all alike and there they sit upon the roofless rocks beneath the green pine trees mingling amongst the sons of Thebes For this city must learn however loth seeing that it is not initiated in my Bacchic rites and I must take up my mother s defence by showing to mortals that the child she bore to Zeus is a deity Now Cadmus gave his sceptre and its privileges to Pentheus his daughter s child who wages war gainst my divinity thrusting me away from his drink offerings and making no mention of me in his prayers Therefore will I prove to him and all the race of Cadmus that I am a god And when I have set all in order here I will pass hence to a fresh country manifesting myself but if the city of Thebes in fury takes up arms and seeks to drive my votaries from the mountain I will meet them at the head of my frantic rout This is why I have assumed a mortal form and put off my godhead to take man s nature

O ye who left Tmolus the bulwark of Lydia ye women my revel rout! whom I brought from your foreign homes to be ever by my side and bear me company uplift the cymbals native to your Phrygian home that were by me and the great mother Rhea first devised and march around the royal halls of Pentheus smiting them that the city of Cadmus may see you while I will seek Cithæron s glens there with my Bacchanals to join the dance

Exit DIONYSUS

Enter CHORUS

Chorus From Asia o er the holy ridge of Tmolus I hasten to a pleasant task a toil that brings no weariness for Bromius sake in honour of the Bacchic god Who loiters in the road? who lingers neath the roof? Avaunt! I say and let every lip be hushed in solemn silence for I will raise a hymn to Dionysus as custom aye ordains O happy he! who to his joy is initiated in heavenly mysteries and leads a holy life joining heart and soul in Bacchic revelry upon the hills purified from every sin observing the rites of Cybele the mighty mother and brandishing the thyrsus with ivy wreathed head he worships Dionysus Go forth go forth ye Bacchanals bring home the Bromian god Dionysus child of a god from the mountains of Phrygia to the spacious streets of Hellas bring home the Bromian god! whom on a day his mother in her sore travail brought forth untimely yielding up her life beneath the lightning stroke of Zeus winged bolt but forthwith Zeus the son of Cronos found for him another womb wherein to rest for he hid him in his thigh and fastened it with golden pins to conceal him from Hera

savage temper a d likewise for the c ty that the god inf ct not a signal engeance Come f llow me w th thy i y wreathed staff try to support my tot ter frame as I do thine for it is unseemly that two old men should fall but let that pass For we must serve the Bacch c god the son of Zeus. Only Cadmus, beware lest Pentheus[1] brin sorrow i thy house it is not my prophetic art but circumstances that lead me to say this for the words of a fool are fo

Exeunt C DMUS *and* TEIRESI S

Ch O holiness, queen amongst the gods sweeping on g lden pin on o er the earth! dost hear the words of Pentheus, dost hear his proud blaspheming against B omius, the son of Semele first of all the blessed gods at e ery merry fest al? H it i to rouse the revellers to dance to la h away dull care and wake the flute whene e at banquets of the god th luscious grape appears, o when the win cup i the fea t sheds sleep on men who wear the ivy-spray. The end of all unbridled speech and lawless senselessness is misery but the l fe f calm repose and the rule of eason abide unshaken and support the home for far away in hea n though they d ll, the powers d behold man state Sophistry is not isd m a d to dul e in thoughts beyond man s k n t t short n life and f man on such poor terms should a m too hi h he may miss the pleasures i h each These to my mind a e the ays f madmen and id ots. Oh! to make my way t Cyprus, isle of Aphrod te whe e dwell the lo god strong to sooth man s so l or to P phos, wh h that foreign n e ne er fed b rain, enriches with ts hundred m ths! Oh! lead me Bromian god celestial guid of Ba ch pilgrims, to the hallowed sl pes of Olympus, whe Pierian Muses have their haunt most fa There dwell th Graces there is soft desire the t t nes may h ld their revels freely Th joy f ou god the son of Zeus, is in banqu ts, h s d l ght is n pea e that g r of riches and n rse do of outh. Both to rich and poor ik hath h gra ted the delight f wine that makes all pain to cea hateful t h m is e ery o e wh c th not t li th l f of bliss, that la t through da nd bts of j y True wisd m is to k ep the hea t nd soul loof from o e-subtle w ts. That wh h th less enl ghtened crowd appr ves nd practises, I ll ccept

Re-enter ENTI US *Enter* SER NT *bri ging* DIO- *ound*

Serv Pe We a e com Pentheus, having hu ted down this prey fo which thou didst send u forth not in ai n hath bee our q est W found ou quarry am h did t fl from us, but i lded himself thout tru gle h s cheek n blanched nor did h rudd colou cha ge but w th smile h bad me bind nd l d him way and h wa ted mak ng m t sk n easy one For ery shame I said t him. Aga n t m ll u tra ger d I lead thee hence but Penth u orde ed t who sent me hith r

As for his votar es whom thou thyself d dst check seizing and bind ng them hand and foot in the public gaol ll these have loosed the r bonds and fled into the meadows where they now are sportin call ing aloud on the Bromian god Their chains t ll off their feet of the r own accord and doors flew open without man s hand t help Many a marvel hath this stra ger b ou ht with him to our city of Thebes what yet remains must be thy care

Pe Loose his hands for now that I have h m in the net he is scarce sw ft enou h to elude me So si stra ger thou art not ill f oured from a woma s point of view which was thy real object in com ng to Thebes thy hair s long because thou hast ne er been a wrestler flowing right down thy cheeks most wanto ly thy skin is wh te to help thee ga n thy end n t tanned by ray of sun but kept within the shade s thou goest in q est of love n th beauty s bait Come tell me first of thy race

Di That needs no b aggart s tongue t s easily tol 1 may be thou knowest *Tmolus* by hearsay

Pe I know it the range that rings the city of Sardis round

D Thence I c me Lydia is my nat e home

Pe What makes thee b in these *mysteries* to H llas?

D Dion sus, the son of Zeus initiated me

Pe I th re a Zeus in Lydia who beg ts new gods?

D No but Zeu who married Semele in Hellas.

Pe Was it by n ht or n the face of day that he con trained th e?

Di 'T as face to face he intrusted his mysteries to me

P Pra what special feature stamps thy rites?

Di That is a secret to be hidden from the uni itiated.

Pe What profit brin they to their votaries?

Di Thou mu t not be told though tis well wo th knowi g

Pe A pr tty piece of trickery to excite my curiosity!

Di A man of godless life is an abomination *to the* rites of th god

P Thou sayest thou didst see the god clearly what was h like?

D What h s fancy chose I was not ther to rder th s

P Anoth r clever twist and *turn* of thin with out a word of answer

D He were a fool methinks, who would utter wisdom to a fool

Pe Ha t thou ome hithe first with this deity?

Di All f r igners already celebrate these mys te es th danc s.

Pe Th reason being, they re far behind H ll nes in wisdom

D In this at lea t fa in advance thou h their cu t ms diff r

Pe Is it b night o day thou performest these dev tions?

Di By n gl t mostly darkness lends solemnity

P Calculated to entrap and corrupt women.

[1] The son of sorrow one of the many plays on names Eu ipides.

was once stitched up in the thigh of Zeus—that child who with his mother was blasted by the lightning flash because the woman falsely said her marriage was with Zeus Is not this enough to deserve the awful penalty of hanging this stranger s wanton insolence whoe er he be?

But lo! another marvel I see Teiresias our diviner dressed in dappled fawn skins and my mother s father too wildly waving the Bacchic wand droll sight enough! Father it grieves me to see you two old men so void of sense Oh! shake that ivy from thee! Let fall the thyrsus from thy hand my mother s sire! Was it thou Teiresias urged him on to this? Art bent on introducing this fellow as another new deity amongst men that thou mayst then observe the fowls of the air and make a gain from fiery divination? Were it not that thy grey hairs protected thee thou shouldst sit in chains amid the Bacchanals for introducing knavish mysteries for where the gladsome grape is found at women s feasts I deny that their rites have any longer good results

Ch What impiety! Hast thou no reverence sir stranger for the gods or for Cadmus who sowed the crop of earth born warriors? Son of Echion as thou art thou dost shame thy birth

Te Whenso a man of wisdom finds a good topic for argument it is no difficult matter to speak well but thou though possessing a glib tongue as if endowed with sense art yet devoid thereof in all thou sayest A headstrong man if he have influence and a capacity for speaking makes a bad citizen because he lacks sense This new deity whom thou deridest will rise to power I cannot say how great throughout Hellas Two things there are young prince that hold first rank among men the goddess Demeter that is the earth call her which name thou please she it is that feedeth men with solid food and as her counterpart came this god the son of Semele who discovered the juice of the grape and introduced it to mankind stilling thereby each grief that mortals suffer from soon as e er they are filled with the juice of the vine and sleep also he giveth sleep that brings forgetfulness of daily ills the sovereign charm for all our woe God though he is he serves all other gods for libations so that through him mankind is blest He it is whom thou dost mock, because he was sewn up in the thigh of Zeus But I will show thee this fair mystery When Zeus had snatched him from the lightning s blaze and to Olympus borne the tender babe Hera would have cast him forth from heaven but Zeus as such a god well might devised a counterplot He broke off a fragment of the ether which surrounds the world and made thereof a hostage against Hera s bitterness while he gave out Dionysus into other hands hence in time men said that he was reared in the thigh of Zeus having changed the word and invented a legend because the god was once a hostage to the goddess Hera This god too hath prophetic power for there is no small prophecy inspired by Bacchic frenzy—for whenever the god in his full might enters the human frame he makes his frantic votaries foretell the future Likewise he hath some share in Ares rights for oft or ever a weapon is touched a panic seizes an army when it is marshalled in array and this too is a frenzy sent by Dionysus Yet shalt thou behold him e en on Delphi s rocks leaping o er the cloven height torch in hand waving and brandishing the branch by Bacchus loved yea and through the length and breadth of Hellas Hearken to me Pentheus never boast that might alone doth sway the world nor if thou think so unsound as thy opinion is credit thyself with any wisdom but receive the god into thy realm, pour out libations join the revel rout and crown thy head It is not Dionysus that will force chastity on women in their love but this is what we should consider whether chastity is part of their nature for good and all for if it is no really modest maid will ever fall mid Bacchic mysteries. Mark this thou thyself art glad when thousands throng thy gates and citizens extol the name of Pentheus he too I trow delights in being honoured Wherefore I and Cadmus whom thou jeerest so, will wreath our brows with ivy and join the dance pair of greybeards though we be still must we take part therein never will I for any words of thine fight against heaven Most grievous is thy madness nor canst thou find a charm to cure thee albeit charms have caused thy malady

Ch Old sir thy words do not discredit Phœbus, and thou art wise in honouring Bromius potent deity

Ca My son Teiresias hath given thee sound advice dwell with us but o erstep not the threshold of custom for now thou art soaring aloft and thy wisdom is no wisdom E en though he be no god as thou assertest still say he is be guilty of a splendid fraud declaring him the son of Semele that she may be thought the mother of a god and we and all our race gain honour Dost thou mark the awful fate of Actæon? whom savage hounds of his own rearing rent in pieces in the meadows because he boasted himself a better hunter than Artemis Lest thy fate be the same come let me crown thy head with ivy join us in rendering homage to the god

Pe Touch me not! away to thy Bacchic rites thyself! never try to infect me with thy foolery! Vengeance will I have on the fellow who teaches thee such senselessness Away one of you without delay! seek yonder seat where he observes his birds wrench it from its base with levers turn it upside down o erthrowing it in utter confusion and toss his garlands to the tempest s blast For by so doing shall I wound him most deeply Others of you range the city and hunt down this girl faced stranger who is introducing a new complaint amongst our women and doing outrage to the marriage tie And if haply ye catch him bring him hither to me in chains to be stoned to death a bitter ending to his revelry in Thebes

Exit PENTHEUS

Te Unhappy wretch! thou little knowest what thou art saying Now art thou become a raving madman even before unsound in mind Let us away Cadmus and pray earnestly for him spite of his

Ch. Indeed I was. Who was to protect me if thou shouldst meet with mishap? But how wert thou set free from the clutches of this godless wretch?

Di. My own hands worked out my own salvation, easily and without trouble.

Ch. But did he not lash fast thy hands with cords?

Di. There too I mocked him; he thinks he bound me, whereas he never touched or caught hold of me, but fed himself on fancy. For at the stall, to which he brought me for a gaol, he found a bull, whose legs and hoofs he straightly tied, breathing out fury the while, the sweat trickling from his body, and he biting his lips; but I from near at hand sat calmly looking on. Meantime came the Bacchic god and made the house quake, and at his mother's tomb relit the fire; but Pentheus, seeing this, thought his palace was ablaze, and hither and thither he rushed, bidding his servants bring water; but all in vain was every servant's busy toil. Thereon he let this labour be a while, and, thinking maybe that I had escaped, rushed into the palace with his murderous sword unsheathed. Then did Bromius—so at least it seemed to me; I only tell thee what I thought—made a phantom in the hall, and he rushed after it in headlong haste, and stabbed the lustrous air, thinking he wounded me. Further the Bacchic god did other outrage to him; he dashed the building to the ground, and there it lies a mass of ruin, a sight to make him rue most bitterly my bonds. At last from sheer fatigue he dropped his sword and fell fainting; for he a mortal frail, dared to wage war upon a god; but I meantime quietly left the house and am come to you, with never a thought of Pentheus. But methinks he will soon appear before the house; at least there is a sound of steps within. What will he say I wonder after this? Well, be his fury never so great, I will lightly bear it; for 'tis a wise man's way to school his temper into due control.

Enter PENTHEUS.

Pe. Shamefully have I been treated; that stranger, whom but now I made so fast in prison, hath escaped me. Ha! there is the man! What means this? How didst thou come forth, to appear thus in front of my palace?

Di. Stay there; thou put and moderate thy fury.

Pe. How is it thou hast escaped thy fetters and art at large?

Di. Did I not say, or didst thou not hear me, "There is one will loose me."

Pe. Who was it? there is always something strange in what thou sayest.

Di. He who makes the clustering vine to grow for man.

Pe.

Di. A fine taunt indeed thou hurlest here at Dionysus.

Pe. (*To his servants.*) Bar every tower that hems us round. Out.

Di. What use? Cannot gods pass even over walls?

Pe. How wise thou art, except where thy wisdom is needed!

Di. Where most 'tis needed, there am I most wise. But first listen to yonder messenger and hear what he says; he comes from the hills with tidings for thee; and I will await thy pleasure, nor seek to fly.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Pentheus, ruler of this realm of Thebes! I am come from Cithaeron, where the dazzling flakes of pure white snow ne'er cease to fall.

Pe. What urgent news dost bring me?

Me. I have seen, O king, those frantic Bacchanals, who darted in frenzy from this land with bare white feet, and I am come to tell thee and the city the wondrous deeds they do, deeds passing strange. But I fain would hear, whether I am freely to tell all I saw there or shorten my story; for I fear thy hasty temper, sire, thy sudden bursts of wrath and more than princely rage.

Pe. Say on, for thou shalt go unpunished by me in all respects; for to be angered with the upright is wrong. The direr thy tale about the Bacchantes, the heavier punishment will I inflict on this fellow who brought his secret arts amongst our women.

Me. I was just driving the herds of kine to a ridge of the hill as I fed them, as the sun shot forth his rays and made the earth grow warm; when lo! I see three revel bands of women; Autonoe was chief of one, thy mother Agave of the second, while Ino's was the third. There they lay asleep, all tired out; some were resting on branches of the pine, others had laid their heads in careless ease on oak leaves piled upon the ground, observing all modesty; not, as thou sayest, seeking to gratify their lusts alone amid the woods, by wine and soft flute music maddened.

Anon in their midst thy mother uprose and cried aloud to wake them from their sleep, when she heard the lowing of my horned kine. And up they started to their feet, brushing from their eyes sleep's quickening dew, a wondrous sight of grace and modesty, young and old and maidens yet unwed. First o'er their shoulders they let stream their hair; then all did gird their fawn-skins up, who hitherto had left the fastenings loose, girdling the dappled hides with snakes that licked their cheeks. Others fondled in their arms gazelles or savage whelps of wolves, and suckled them—young mothers these with babes at home, whose breasts were still full of milk; crowns they wore of ivy or of oak or blossoming convolvulus. And one took her thyrsus and struck it into the earth, and forth there gushed a limpid spring; and another plunged her wand into the lap of earth and there the god sent up a fount of wine; and all who wished for draughts of milk had but to scratch the soil with their finger-tips and there they had it in abundance, while from every ivy-wreathed staff sweet rills of honey trickled.

Hadst thou been there and seen this, thou wouldst have turned to pray to the god, whom now thou dost disparage. Anon we herdsmen and shepherds met to discuss their strange and wondrous doings; then one, who wandereth oft to town and hath a trick of speech, made harangue in the midst, "O ye who dwell upon the hallowed mountain terraces!

Di Day too for that matter may discover shame

Pe This vile quibbling settles thy punishment

Di Brutish ignorance and godlessness will settle thine

Pe How bold our Bacchanal is growing! a very master in this wordy strife!

Di Tell me what I am to suffer what is the grievous doom thou wilt inflict upon me?

Pe First will I shear off thy dainty tresses

Di My locks are sacred for the god I let them grow

Pe Next surrender that thyrsus

Di Take it from me thyself tis the wand of Dionysus I am bearing

Pe In dungeon deep thy body will I guard

Di The god himself will set me free whene er I list

Pe Perhaps he may when thou standest amid thy Bacchanals and callest on his name

Di Even now he is near me and witnesses my treatment

Pe Why where is he? To my eyes he is invisible

Di He is by my side thou art a godless man and therefore dost not see him

Pe Seize him! the fellow scorns me and Thebes too

Di I bid you bind me not reason addressing madness

Pe But I say bind! with better right than thou

Di Thou hast no knowledge of the life thou art leading thy very existen e is now a mystery to thee

Pe I am Pentheus son of Agave and Echion

Di Well named to be misfortune s mate!

Pe Avaunt! Ho! shut him up within the horses stalls hard by that for light he may have pitchy gloom Do thy dancing there and these women whom thou bringest with thee to share thy villainies I will either sell as slaves or make their hands cease from this noisy beating of drums and set them to work at the loom as servants of my own

Di I will go for that which fate forbids can never befall me For this thy mockery be sure Dionysus will exact a recompense of thee—even the god whose existence thou deniest for thou art injuring him by haling me to prison

Exit DIONYSUS *guarded and* PENTHEUS

Ch Hail to thee Dirce happy maid daughter revered of Achelous! within thy founts thou didst receive in days gone by the babe of Zeus what time his father caught him up into his thigh from out the *deathless flame while thus he cried Go rest my* Dithyrambus there within thy father s womb by this name O Bacchic god I now proclaim thee to Thebes But thou blest Dirce thrustest me aside when in thy midst I strive to hold my revels graced with crowns Why dost thou scorn me? Why avoid me? By the clustered charm that Dionysus sheds o er the vintage I vow there yet shall come a time when thou wilt turn thy thoughts to Bromius What furious rage the earth born race displays even Pentheus sprung of a dragon of old himself the son of earth born Echion a savage monster in his very men not made in human mould but like some murderous giant pitted against heaven for he means to bind me the handmaid of Bromius, in cords forthwith and e en now he keeps my fellow reveller pent within his palace plunged in a gloomy dungeon Dost thou mark this O Dionysus son of Zeus, thy prophets struggling gainst resistless might? Come O king brandishing thy golden thyrsus along the slopes of Olympus restrain the pride of this blood thirsty wretch! Oh! where in Nysa haunt of beasts, or on the peaks of Corycus art thou Dionysus marshalling with thy wand the revellers? or haply in the thick forest depths of Olympus where erst Orpheus with his lute gathered trees to his minstrelsy and beasts that range the fields Ah blest Pieria! Evius honours thee to thee will he come with his Bacchic rites to lead the dance and thither will he lead the circling Mænads crossing the swift current of Axius and the Lydias that giveth wealth and happiness to man yea and the father of rivers, which as I have heard enri hes with his waters fair a land of steeds

Di (*Within*) What ho! my Bacchantes ho! hear my call oh! hear

Ch I Who art thou? what Evian cry is this that calls me? whence comes it?

Di What ho! once more I call I the son of Semele the child of Zeus

Ch II My master O my master hail!

Ch III Come to our revel band O Bromian god

Ch IV Thou solid earth!

Ch V Most awful shock!

Ch VI O horror! soon will the palace of Pentheus totter and fall

Ch VII Dionysus is within this house

Ch VIII Do homage to him

Ch IX We do! we do!

Ch X Did ye mark yon architrave of stone upon the columns start asunder?

Ch XI Within these walls the triumph shout of Bromius himself will rise

Di Kindle the blazing torch with lightning s fire abandon to the flames the halls of Pentheus

Ch XII Ha! dost not see the flame dost not clearly mark it at the sacred tomb of *Semele the* lightning flame which long ago the hurler of the bolt left there?

Ch XIII Your trembling limbs prostrate ye Mænads low upon the ground

Ch XIV Yea for our king the son of Zeus is *assailing and utterly confounding this house*

Enter DIONYSUS

Di Are ye so stricken with terror that ye have fallen to the earth O foreign dames? Ye saw then it would seem how the Bacchic god made Pentheus halls to quake but arise be of good heart compose your trembling limbs

Ch O chiefest splendour of our gladsome Bacchic sport with what joy I see thee in my loneliness!

Di Were ye cast down when I was led into the house to be plunged into the gloomy dungeons of Pentheus?

P Well said! Thou hast g en me a taste of thy t already

Di Dion sus schooled me in this lore

Pe How am I to carry out thy wholesom ad ice?

Di M self will enter thy palac and obe thee

Pe What s the robe to be? a woman s? N y I am ashamed

D Thy ea erness to see the Mænads goes no further

P B t what d ess dost say thou wilt robe me in?

Di Upon thy head w ll I make thy hai g ow long

P Desc be my costum further

Di Th u w lt wear a r be reach n to thy feet and on thy head shall be a snood

Pe Wilt add a ght lse to m att re?

D A th rsus in thy hand and a dappled fawn skin

P I can ever put on woman s d ess.

Di Then wilt thou cause bloodshed by coming to blows ith the B c hanals

P Thou art right Best g spy upon them fi t

Di W ll, e en that is wiser than by d mean t follow evil ends.

P But how shall I pass through the city of the Cadmea seen?

Di We will g b unfreque ted paths. I will lead the a

P A th ng rath r than that the Bac hantes should la gh t m

Di W ll e ter the palace and co der th proper t ps

Pe Thou ha t my lea e. I am all ead ess I will e t pr pa ed t set out e th r sw rd n ha d or follow th d ce *Exit* PENTHE S

Di W men! our p ze s nearly t th n s Soon shall h ea h the B cchanals, and th re pay fo f st ith h l fe O Dionysus! n w t s th t act for thou t n t fa way let u take en ea ce n him F rst dr him mad by fi ing in his so l a ward f [illegible] ne r wh l t his senses a ht wn w ll h conse t t don woman s dress but w h n his m nd g tra h will p t n And fa n wo ld I mak h m la h tock t Th bes s h s led [illegible] oma d ess through th c ts fte those threats th h h h m naced m before B t I w ll go t ra l th those r bes whi h h shall wear h h set t f H des hall t m to h s ow mo h f rs so hall h ow ze Di us, th f Ze s, h p himself t last a god most er bl for ll h g t m s t man

Ex t [illegible]

Ch W ll th wh foo [illegible] ght lo g da hat t m B h et t s l tos m eck h dew b th l k fa n that gambols mid th m dow g d l ghts, wh he hath es ped th fea f l have lea f th wat h rs, er [illegible] n t wh l th h t ma th loud hal l ha k on h hou d f ll ers nd h w th la bou ed br th t l h m g peed bound o the [illegible] m adows, glad t be f om man m d b f large f th bosk g e What true sdom or hat fa b m ha bea paced n m tt ls reach than to ga n the mastery o er a fallen foe? What is fair s dear for a e Though slow be its ad ance yet surely mo es the power of the gods, cor rect ng those mortal wights that court a senseless pr de or in the madness of their fancy disregard the gods Subtly they lie in wa t thr gh the long march of time and so hunt d n the godless man For it is ne er ri ht in theory or n pract ce to o er ride the law of custom This is a maxim cheaply bought whate er comes of God or in time s long a nals has grown into a law upon a natural ba s, this s so ere gn What s true wisdom or what fairer boon has hea en placed in mortals reach than to gain the mast ry o er a fallen foe? What is fair is dear for a y Happy is he who hath escaped the wave from ut the sea and reached the ha en and happy he who hath triumphed o er his troubles though one surpasses anoth r in wealth and power yet there be myriad hopes f r all the m riad minds som end in happiness for man and others come to nau ht but him whose life from d y to day is blest I deem a happy man

En er DIONYSUS

Di Ho! P ntheus thou that art so eager to s e what is forb dden and to show thy zeal in an un worthy cause ome fo th before the pala e let me see thee clad as a woman in frenzied B cchante s d ess to spy upon thy o n mother a d her com pa

En er P NTHE S

Yes, thou resemblest closely a daughter of Cadmus.

Pe Of a truth I seem to see two suns, and two towns of Thebes, ur seve gated city nd th u metht ks, art a b ll going befo e to gu de me and on thy head a pa r of horns ha e grown. Wert th u eally nc a brute beast? Th n hast t an r te the appeara ce of bull.

D Th god attends us ungra ous he etof re but now our sworn friend a d no thine eyes be hold th things they sh ld

Pe Pr y what do I resemble? Is not mine the car iag of Ino r Ag e my wn mother?

D In seeing thee I seem to see them in perso B t th tress t stray ng fr m ts place no lo ger as I bound t neath the s ood

Pe I d sa a ged it from ts place as I tossed it to and fro w th n my chamber B cch c ee tas

D Well I will rea ra ge it ce to te d thee s my ca l ld p this head

P Com put t st right for o thee do I depend

D Thy girdle is loose d the f lds of thy dress d not ha g e enl below thy a kles

P I g e to that a gard the r ht de but n the ther m d es hanes st ht w th my foot

D Surely thou wilt rank m first am ng thy friends, when c t ry to thy spectat n tho find est th B hantes r ous

P Shall I h old th thyrsus in th ri ht or l ft hand to look most l k a Ba hanal?

D H d t in thy ght hand and step out w th thy right foot thy cha ge of mind compels thy praise.

shall we chase Agave mother of Pentheus from her Bacchic rites and thereby do our prince a service? We liked his speech and placed ourselves in hidden ambush among the leafy thickets they at the appointed time began to wave the thyrsus for their Bacchic rites calling on Iacchus the Bromian god the son of Zeus in united chorus and the whole mount and the wild creatures re echoed their cry all nature stirred as they rushed on Now Agave chanced to come springing near me so up I leapt from out my ambush where I lay concealed meaning to seize her But she cried out What ho! my nimble hounds here are men upon our track but follow me ay follow with the thyrsus in your hand for weapon Thereat we fled to escape being torn in pieces by the Bacchantes but they with hands that bore no weapon of steel attacked our cattle as they browsed Then wouldst thou have seen Agave mastering some sleek lowing calf while others rent the heifers limb from limb Before thy eyes there would have been hurling of ribs and hoofs this way and that and strips of flesh all blood bedabbled dripped as they hung from the pine branches Wild bulls that glared but now with rage along their horns found themselves tripped up dragged down to earth by countless maidens hands The flesh upon their limbs was stripped therefrom quicker than thou couldst have closed thy royal eye lids Then off they sped like birds that skim the air to the plains beneath the hills which bear a fruitful harvest for Thebes beside the waters of Asopus to Hysiae and Erythrae hamlets neath Cithæron s peak with fell intent swooping on everything and scattering all pellmell and they would snatch children from their homes but all that they placed upon their shoulders abode there firmly without being tied and fell not to the dusky earth not even brass or iron and on their hair they carried fire and it burnt them not but the country folk rushed to arms furious at being pillaged by Bacchanals whereon ensued O king this wondrous spectacle For though the iron shod dart would draw no blood from them they with the thyrsus which they hurled caused many a wound and put their foes to utter rout women chasing men by some god s intervention Then they returned to the place whence they had started even to the springs the god had made to spout for them and there washed off the blood while serpents with their tongues were licking clean each gout from their cheeks Wherefore my lord and master receive this deity whoe er he be within the city for great as he is in all else I have likewise heard men say twas he that gave the vine to man sorrow s antidote Take wine away and Cypris flies and every other human joy is dead

Ch Though I fear to speak my mind with freedom in the presence of my king still must I utter this Dionysus yields to no deity in might

Pe Already look you! the presumption of these Bacchantes is upon us swift as fire a sad disgrace in the eyes of all Hellas No time for hesitation now! away to the Electra gate! order a muster of all my men at arms of those that mount fleet steeds, of all who brandish light bucklers of archers too that make the bowstring twang for I will march against the Bacchanals By Heaven! this passes all if we are to be thus treated by women

Exit MESSENGER

D Still obdurate O Pentheus after hearing my words! In spite of all the evil treatment I am enduring from thee still I warn thee of the sin of bearing arms against a god and bid thee cease for Bromius will not endure thy driving his votaries from the mountains where they revel

Pe A truce to thy preaching to me! thou hast escaped thy bonds preserve thy liberty else will I renew thy punishment

Di I would rather do him sacrifice than in a fury kick against the pricks thou a mortal he a god

Pe Sacrifice! that will I by setting afoot a wholesale slaughter of women mid Cithæron s glens, as they deserve

Di Ye will all be put to flight—a shameful thing that they with the Bacchic thyrsus should rout your mail clad warriors

Pe I find this stranger a troublesome foe to encounter doing or suffering he is alike irrepressible

Di Friend there is still a way to compose this bitterness

Pe Say how am I to serve my own servants?

Di I will bring the women hither without weapons

Pe Ha! ha! this is some crafty scheme of thine against me

Di What kind of scheme if by my craft I purpose to save thee?

Pe You have combined with them to form this plot that your revels may go on for ever

Di Nay but this is the very compact I made with the god be sure of that

Pe (*Preparing to start forth*) Bring forth my arms. Not another word from thee!

Di Ha! wouldst thou see them seated on the hills?

Pe Of all things yes! I would give untold sums for that

Di Why this sudden strong desire?

Pe 'Twill be a bitter sight if I find them drunk with wine

Di And would that be a pleasant sight which will prove bitter to thee?

Pe Believe me yes! beneath the fir trees as I sit in silence

Di Nay they will track thee though thou come secretly

Pe Well I will go openly thou wert right to say so

Di Am I to be thy guide? wilt thou essay the road?

Pe Lead on with all speed I grudge thee all delay

Di Array thee then in robes of fine linen

Pe Why so? Am I to enlist among women after being a man?

Di They may kill thee if thou show thy manhood there

ing each other in hymns of Bacchic rapture. But Pentheus, son of sorrow, seeing not the women gathered there exclaimed, "Sir stranger, from where I stand, I cannot clearly see the mock Bacchantes; but I will climb a hillock or a soaring pine whence to see clearly the shameful doings of the Bacchanals." Then and there I saw the stranger work a miracle; for catching a lofty fir branch by the very end he drew it downward to the dusky earth, lower yet and ever lower; and like a bow it bent or rounded wheel, whose curving circle grows complete, as chalk and line describe it; even so the stranger drew down the mountain branch between his hands, bending it to earth, by more than human energy. And when he had seated Pentheus aloft on the fir branches, he let them slip through his hands gently, careful not to shake him from his seat. Up soared the branch straight into the air above with my master perched thereon, seen by the Maenads better far than he saw them; for scarce was he beheld upon his lofty throne, when the stranger disappeared, while from the sky there came a voice, 'twould seem, by Dionysus uttered—

"Maidens, I bring the man who tried to mock you and me and my mystic rites; take vengeance on him." And as he spake, he raised 'twixt heaven and earth a dazzling column of awful flame. Hushed grew the sky, and still hung each leaf throughout the grassy glen, nor couldst thou have heard one creature cry. But they, not sure of the voice they heard, sprang up and peered all round; then once again his bidding came; and when the daughters of Cadmus knew it was the Bacchic god in very truth that called, swift as doves they darted off in eager haste, his mother Agave and her sisters dear and all the Bacchanals; through torrent glen, o'er boulders huge they bounded on, inspired with madness by the god. Soon as they saw my master perched upon the fir, they set to hurling stones at him with all their might, mounting a commanding eminence, and with pine branches he was pelted as with darts; and others shot their wands through the air at Pentheus, their hapless target, but all to no purpose. For there he sat beyond the reach of their hot endeavours, a helpless victim. At last they rent off limbs from oaks and were for prising up the roots with levers not of iron. But when they still could make no end to all their toil, Agave cried: "Come stand around and grip the sapling trunk, my Bacchanals! that we may catch the beast that sits thereon, lest he divulge the secrets of our god's religion."

Then were a thousand hands laid on the fir, and from the ground they tore it up, while he from his seat aloft came tumbling to the ground with lamentations long and loud, even Pentheus; for well he knew his hour was come. His mother first, a priestess for the nonce, began the bloody deed and fell upon him; whereon he tore the snood from off his hair, that hapless Agave might recognize and spare him, crying as he touched her cheek, "O mother! it is I, thy own son Pentheus, the child thou didst bear in Echion's halls; have pity on me, mother dear! oh! do not for any sin of mine slay thy own son."

But she, the while, with foaming mouth and wildly rolling eyes, bereft of reason as she was, heeded him not; for the god possessed her. And she caught his left hand in her grip, and planting her foot upon her victim's trunk she tore the shoulder from its socket, not of her own strength, but the god made it an easy task to her hands; and Ino set to work upon the other side, rending the flesh with Autonoe and all the eager host of Bacchanals; and one united cry arose, the victim's groans while yet he breathed, and their triumphant shouts. One would make an arm her prey, another a foot with the sandal on it; and his ribs were stripped of flesh by their rending nails; and each one with blood-dabbled hands was tossing Pentheus' limbs about. Scattered lies his corpse, part beneath the rugged rocks, and part amid the deep dark woods, no easy task to find; but his poor head hath his mother made her own, and fixing it upon the point of a thyrsus, as it had been a mountain lion's, she bears it through the midst of Cithaeron, having left her sisters with the Maenads at their rites. And she is entering these walls exulting in her hunting fraught with woe, calling on the Bacchic god her fellow-hunter who had helped her to triumph in a chase, where her only prize was tears.

But I will get me hence, away from this piteous scene, before Agave reach the palace. To my mind self-restraint and reverence for the things of God point alike the best and wisest course for all mortals who pursue them.

Exit MESSENGER.

Ch. Come, let us exalt our Bacchic god in choral strain, let us loudly chant the fall of Pentheus from the serpent sprung, who assumed a woman's dress and took the fair Bacchic wand, sure pledge of death, with a bull to guide him to his doom. O ye Bacchanals of Thebes! glorious is the triumph ye have achieved, ending in sorrow and tears. 'Tis a noble enterprise to dabble the hand in the blood of a son till it drips. But hist! I see Agave, the mother of Pentheus, with wild rolling eye hasting to the house; welcome the revellers of the Bacchic god.

Enter AGAVE.

Agave. Ye Bacchanals from Asia!

Ch. Why dost thou rouse me? why?

Ag. From the hills I am bringing to my home a tendril freshly-culled, glad guerdon of the chase.

Ch. I see it, and I will welcome thee unto our revels. All hail!

Ag. I caught him with never a snare, this lion's whelp, as ye may see.

Ch. From what desert lair?

Ag. Cithaeron—

Ch. Yes, Cithaeron?

Ag. Was his death.

Ch. Who was it gave the first blow?

Ag. Mine that privilege; "Happy Agave!" they call me in our revellers.

Ch. Who did the rest?

Pe Shall I be able to carry on my shoulders Cithæron s glens the Bacchanals and all?

Di Yes if so thou wilt for though thy mind was erst diseased tis now just as it should be

Pe Shall we take levers or with my hands can I uproot it thrusting arm or shoulder neath its peaks?

Di No no! destroy not the seats of the Nymphs and the haunts of Pan the place of his piping

Pe Well said! Women must not be mastered by brute force amid the pines will I conceal myself

Di Thou shalt hide thee in the place that fate appoints coming by stealth to spy upon the Bacchanals

Pe Why methinks they are already caught in the pleasant snares of dalliance like birds amid the brakes

Di Set out with watchful heed then for this very purpose maybe thou wilt catch them if thou be not first caught thyself

Pe Conduct me through the very heart of Thebes for I am the only man among them bold enough to do this deed

Di Thou alone bearest thy country s burden thou and none other wherefore there await thee such struggles as needs must Follow me for I will guide thee safely thither another shall bring thee thence

Pe My mother maybe

Di For every eye to see

Pe My very purpose in going

Di Thou shalt be carried back

Pe What luxury!

Di In thy mother s arms

Pe Thou wilt e en force me into luxury

Di Yes to luxury such as this

Pe Truly the task I am undertaking deserves it

Exit PENTHEUS

Di Strange ah! strange is thy career leading to scenes of woe so strange that thou shalt achieve a fame that towers to heaven Stretch forth thy hands Agave and ye her sisters daughters of Cadmus mighty is the strife to which I am bringing the youthful king and the victory shall rest with me and Bromius all else the event will show

Exit DIONYSUS

Ch To the hills! to the hills! fleet hounds of madness where the daughters of Cadmus hold their revels goad them into wild fury against the man disguised in woman s dress a frenzied spy upon the Mænads First shall his mother mark him as he peers from some smooth rock or riven tree and thus to the Mænads she will call Who is this of Cadmus sons comes hasting to the mount to the mountain away to spy on us my Bacchanals? Whose child can he be? For he was never born of woman s blood but from some lioness maybe or Libyan Gorgon is he sprung Let justice appear and show herself sword in hand to plunge it through and through the throat of the godless lawless, impious son of Echion earth s monstrous child! who with wicked heart and lawless rage with mad intent and frantic purpose sets out to meddle with thy holy rites, and with thy mother s, Bacchic god thinking with his weak arm to master might as masterless as thine This is the life that saves all pain if a man confine his thoughts to human themes, as is his mortal nature making no pretence where heaven is concerned. I envy not deep subtleties far other joys have I in tracking out great truths writ clear from all eternity that a man should live his life by day and night in purity and holiness striving toward a noble goal, and should honour the gods by casting from him each ordinance that lies outside the pale of right Let justice show herself advancing sword in hand to plunge it through and through the throat of Echion s son that godless, lawless, and abandoned child of earth! Appear O Bacchus to our eyes as a bull or serpent with a hundred heads or take the shape of a lion breathing flame! Oh! come and with a mocking smile cast the deadly noose about the hunter of thy Bacchanals e en as he swoops upon the Mænads gathered yonder

Enter 2ND MESSENGER.

2nd Messenger O house so prosperous once through Hellas long ago home of the old Sidonian prince who sowed the serpent s crop of earth born men how do I mourn thee! slave though I be, yet still the sorrows of his master touch a good slave s heart

Ch How now? Hast thou fresh tidings of the Bacchantes?

2nd Me Pentheus Echion s son is dead

Ch Bromius my king! now art thou appearing in thy might divine

2nd Me Ha! what is it thou sayest? art thou glad woman at my master s misfortunes?

Ch A stranger I and in foreign tongue I express my joy for now no more do I cower in terror of the chain

2nd Me Dost think Thebes so poor in men * * ?[1]

* * *

Ch Tis Dionysus Dionysus not Thebes that lords it over me

2nd Me All can I pardon thee save this to exult o er hopeless suffering is sorry conduct dames.

Ch Tell me oh! tell me how he died that villain scheming villainy!

2nd Me Soon as we had left the homesteads of this Theban land and had crossed the streams of Asopus we began to breast Cithæron s heights Pentheus and I for I went with my master and the stranger too who was to guide us to the scene First then we sat us down in a grassy glen carefully silencing each footfall and whispered breath to see without being seen Now there was a dell walled in by rocks with rills to water it and shady pines o er head there were the Mænads seated busied with joyous toils Some were wreathing afresh the drooping thyrsus with curling ivy sprays others like colts let loose from the carved chariot yoke were answer

[1]Probably the whole of one iambic line with part of another is here lost.

[illegible] Pentheus [illegible]

[illegible]

"[illegible] I bring the man who tried to mock [illegible] vengeance on [illegible]"

[illegible] Cadmus knew it was the Bacchic [illegible]

[illegible] "Come [illegible] round, and [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] Pentheus [illegible]"

Then [illegible] Pentheus [illegible] "O mother," [illegible]

[illegible] Cithaeron [illegible]

But I will get me hence, away from this [illegible] Agave [illegible] Cadmus [illegible]

[illegible]

Ch. Come, [illegible] Bacchic [illegible] Pentheus [illegible] O ye Bacchantes of Thebes [illegible] But lo! I see Agave, the mother of Pentheus [illegible] the Bacchic [illegible]

Enter AGAVE.

Agave. Ye Bacchanals [illegible]

Ch. Who [illegible]

A. From the hills I am bringing [illegible] fresh-culled, glad [illegible] of the chase.

Ch. I see it, and I will welcome thee [illegible]

A. I caught [illegible]

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[1] Probably th whol of o e iamb c l ne w th part of another is here lost.

Ag. Speak, my bosom throbs at this suspense.

Ca. 'Twas thou didst slay him, thou and thy sisters.

Ag. Where died he? in his house or where?

Ca. On the very spot where hounds of yore rent Actaeon in pieces.

Ag. Why went this wretched youth to Cithaeron?

Ca. He would go and mock the god and thy Bacchic rites.

Ag. But how was it we had journeyed thither?

Ca. Ye were distraught, the whole city had the Bacchic frenzy.

Ag. 'Twas Dionysus proved our ruin; now I see it all.

Ca. Yes, for the slight he suffered; ye would not believe in his godhead.

Ag. Father, where is my dear child's corpse?

Ca. With toil I searched it out and am bringing it myself.

Ag. Is it all fitted limb to limb in seemly wise?

Ca. [1]

Ag. But what had Pentheus to do with folly of mine?

Ca. He was like you in refusing honour to the god, who, therefore, hath involved you all in one common ruin, you and him alike, to destroy this house and me, forasmuch as I, that had no sons, behold this youth, the fruit of thy womb, unhappy mother! foully and most shamefully slain. To thee, my child, our house looked up; to thee my daughter's son, the stay of my palace, inspiring the city with awe; none cared to flout the old king when he saw thee by, for he would get his deserts. But now shall I be cast out dishonoured from my halls, Cadmus the great, who sowed the crop of Theban seed and reaped that goodly harvest. O beloved child! dead though thou art, thou still shalt be counted by me amongst my own dear children; no more wilt thou lay thy hand upon my chin in fond embrace, my child, and calling on thy mother's sire demand, "Who wrongs thee or dishonours thee, old sire? who vexes thy heart, thorn within thy side? Speak, that I may punish the oppressor, father mine!"

But now am I in sorrow plunged, and woe is thee and woe thy mother and her suffering sisters too! Ah! if there be any man that scorns the gods, let him well mark this prince's death and then believe in them.

Ch. Cadmus, I am sorry for thy fate; for though thy daughter's child hath met but his deserts, 'tis bitter grief to thee.

Ag. O father, thou seest how sadly my fortune is changed.[2]

Di.

Thou shalt be changed into a serpent; and thy wife Harmonia, Ares' child, whom thou in thy human life didst wed, shall be transformed into a snake, and take its form. With her shalt thou, as leader of barbarian tribes, drive thy team of steers, so saith an oracle of Zeus; and many a city shalt thou sack with an army numberless; but in the day they plunder the oracle of Loxias, shall they rue their homeward march; but thee and Harmonia will Ares rescue, and set thee to live henceforth in the land of the blessed. This do I declare, I Dionysus, son of no mortal father but of Zeus. Had ye learnt wisdom when ye would not, ye would now be happy with the son of Zeus for your ally.

Ag. O Dionysus! we have sinned; thy pardon we implore.

Di. Too late have ye learnt to know me; ye knew me not at the proper time.

Ag. We recognize our error; but thou art too revengeful.

Di. Yea, for I, though a god, was slighted by you.

Ag. Gods should not let their passion sink to man's level.

Di. Long ago my father Zeus ordained it thus.

Ag. Alas! my aged sire, our doom is fixed; 'tis woful exile!

Di. Why then delay the inevitable? *Exit.*

Ca. Daughter, to what an awful pass are we now come, thou too, poor child, and thy sisters, while I alas! in my old age must seek barbarian shores, to sojourn there; but the oracle declares that I shall yet lead an army, half barbarian, half Hellene, to Hellas; and in serpent shape shall I carry my wife Harmonia, the daughter of Ares, transformed like me to a savage snake, against the altars and tombs of Hellas at the head of my troops; nor shall I ever cease from my woes, ah me! nor ever cross the downward stream of Acheron and be at rest.

Ag. Father, I shall be parted from thee and exiled.

Ca. Alas! my child, why fling thy arms around me, as a snowy cygnet folds its wings about the frail old swan?

Ag. Whither can I turn, an exile from my country?

Ca. I know not, my daughter; small help is thy father now.

Ag. Farewell, my home! farewell, my native city! with sorrow I am leaving thee, an exile from my bridal bower.

Ca. Go, daughter, to the house of Aristaeus.

*

Ag. Father, I mourn for thee.

Ca. And I for thee, my child; for thy sisters too I shed a tear.

Ag. Ah! terribly was king Dionysus bringing this outrage on thy house.

Ca. Yes, for he suffered cruel insults from you, his name receiving no tribute of honour in Thebes.

Ag. Farewell, father mine.

Ca. Farewell, my hapless daughter! and yet thou scarce canst reach that bourn.

Ag. Oh! lead me, guide me to the place where I shall find my sisters, sharers in my exile, to their

[1] One line, if not more, is wanting here.

[2] After this line a very large lacuna occurs in the MS.

* Another lacuna follows.

Ag Cadmus—

Ch What of him?

Ag His daughters struck the monster after me yes after me

Ch Fortune smiled upon thy hunting here

Ag Come share the banquet

Ch Share? ah! what?

Ag 'Tis but a tender whelp the down just sprouting on its cheek beneath a crest of falling hair

Ch The hair is like some wild creature s

Ag The Bacchic god a hunter skilled roused his Mænads to pursue this quarry skilfully

Ch Yea our king is a hunter indeed

Ag Dost approve?

Ch Of course I do

Ag Soon shall the race of Cadmus—

Ch And Pentheus her own son shall to his mother—

Ag Offer praise for this her quarry of the lion s brood

Ch Quarry strange!

Ag And strangely caught

Ch Dost thou exult?

Ag Right glad am I to have achieved a great and glorious triumph for my land that all can see

Ch Alas for thee! show to the folk the booty thou hast won and art bringing hither

Ag All ye who dwell in fair fenced Thebes draw near! that ye may see the fierce wild beast that we daughters of Cadmus made our prey not with the thong thrown darts of Thessaly nor yet with snares but with our fingers fair Ought men idly to boast and get them armourers weapons? when we with these our hands have caught this prey and torn the monster limb from limb? Where is my aged sire? let him approach And where is Pentheus my son? Let him bring a ladder and raise it against the house to nail up on the gables this lion s head my booty from the chase

Enter CADMUS

Ca Follow me servants to the palace front with your sad burden in your arms ay follow with the corpse of Pentheus which after long weary search I found as ye see it torn to pieces amid Cithæron s glens and am bringing hither no two pieces did I find together as they lay scattered through the trackless wood For I heard what awful deeds one of my daughters had done just as I entered the city walls with old Teiresias r turning from the Bacchanals so I turned again unto the hill and bring from thence my son who was slain by Mænads There I saw Autonoe that bare Actæon on a day to Aristæus and Ino with her still ranging the oak groves in their unhappy frenzy but one told me that that other Agave was rushing wildly hither nor was it idly said for there I see her sight of woe!

Ag Father loudly mayst thou boast that the daughters thou hast begotten are far the best of mortal race of one and all I speak though chiefly of myself who left my shuttle at the loom for nobler enterprise even to hunt savage beasts with my hands and in my arms I bring my prize as thou seest that it may be nailed up on thy palace wall take it father in thy hands and proud of my hunting call thy friends to a banquet for blest art thou, ah! doubly blest in these our gallant exploits.

Ca O grief that has no bounds too cruel for mortal eye! tis murder ye have done with your hapless hands Fair is the victim thou hast offered to the gods inviting me and my Thebans to the feast! Ah woe is me! first for thy sorrows then for mine What ruin the god the Bromian king hath brought on us just maybe but too severe seeing he is our kinsman!

Ag How peevish old age makes men! what sullen looks! Oh may my son follow in his mother s footsteps and be as lucky in his hunting when he goes in quest of game in company with Theban youths! But he can do naught but wage war with gods. Father tis thy duty to warn him Who will summon him hither to my sight to witness my happiness?

Ca Alas for you! alas! Terrible will be your grief when ye are conscious of your deeds could ye remain for ever till life s close in your present state ye would not spite of ruined bliss appear so cursed with woe

Ag Why? what is faulty here? what here for sorrow?

Ca First let thine eye look up to heaven

Ag See! I do so Why dost thou suggest my looking thereupon?

Ca Is it still the same or dost think there s any change?

Ag Tis brighter than it was and clearer too

Ca Is there still that wild unrest within thy soul?

Ag I know not what thou sayest now yet me thinks my brain is clearing and my former frenzy passed away

Ca Canst understand and give distinct replies?

Ag Father how completely I forget all we said before!

Ca To what house wert thou brought with marriage hymns?

Ag Thou didst give me to earthborn Echion as men call him

Ca What child was born thy husband in his halls?

Ag Pentheus of my union with his father

Ca What head is that thou barest in thy arms?

Ag A lion s at least they said so who hunted it

Ca Consider it aright tis no great task to look at it

Ag Ah! what do I see? what is this I am carrying in my hands?

Ca Look closely at it make thy knowledge more certain

Ag Ah woe is me! O sight of awful sorrow!

Ca Dost think it like a lion s head?

Ag Ah no! tis Pentheus head which I his unhappy mother hold

Ca Bemoaned by me or ever thou didst recognize him

Ag Who slew him? How came he into my hands?

Ca O piteous truth! how ill timed thy presence here!

HECUBA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Ghost of Polydore	Odysseus
He cb	T lthybius
Ch rc of C ptt e T y n Women	M id
Polyx n	Ag memnon
Polymestor *and h s ch dren*	

Scene *Before Ag memn stent po the shore of the Thr cian Cherso ese* Enter Ghost of Polydore.

Ghost Lo! I am come f om out the charnel house and gates of gloom, wh re Hades dwells apart from gods, I Pol dore, son of Hecuba th da ghter of Cisseus and f Priam Now my fathe when Phrygia s capital a threatened w th destru t b the pear f Hellas, took alarm and con ed me secretly from th land f T y t P l mestor house his fr nd in Thra e ho sows these fruitf l plains of Ch r sonese curbing by his m ght a nation d light ng in horses. And w th me m fath r sent great sto of gold by stealth that f r Ili m s walls should fall, his child n that sur ed m ght not want for means t li e. I was the youngest of Priam s sons and thus it wa that caused my stealthy emo l from th land for my h ld sh rm a led not to carry eapon o to w ld the spea So l ng then s th bulwarks f our land stood firm, nd Troy battl ment abode nshak n and my br th r Hec to prospered in his warri g I poo ch ld g ew up nd flourished, like som igorous hoot t the cou t f the Thracia my fath fri nd B t wh n Troy f ll a d Hector lost his lif nd my fathe s hearth was rooted p nd himself f ll b tch ed t the god built lt by the hands f A hilles murd ous son then did m fath s friend sla me hi h lpless guest f the sak of the g ld and thereaft r cast m int th sw ll f th sea to keep th ld for himself n his house And ther I lie one tim upon th trand th r in th salt sea s surg dr ftin e er p nd down po the b l ws, u wept un b ried b t ow m l h n o th head f my dea moth Hec ba, a d sembod ed pant keeping m airs t t these th ee days, e since m poor mo h cam f m T o r h g h n Ch rsonese Mea t m all h A haean t d l her in their ships t th h es f Thra f r th son f P leus, A h l es, ppea ed bo h, t mb d stayed the whol host f Hellas, as th w maki g straight f hom ross th sea demanding to ha e my ns P ly ena off ed t hi tomb, and to rece his gu d n. And h will btain this prize no w d they th t are hi friends refuse the gift nd on this se y da is fate lea l g my si ter to her doom. So will my mother see two children dead at once me and that ill fated ma d For I to w n a gra e ah me! w ll appear am d the rippling waves before her bond ma d s feet Yes! I ha e won this boon from the powers below that I should f nd a tomb and fall into my mother s hands so shall I get my heart s des re wherefore I will go and waylay aged Hecuba for yonder she passeth on her way from the shelter of Agamemnon s te t terrified at my spectre (*En ter* cuba) Woe s thee! ah, mother m ne! from a palace dra ged to face a l fe of sla ery! how sad thy lot as sad as once twas blest! Some god is now de t oy ng thee sett ng this in the balance to out weigh thy former bl ss. Ghost *vanishes*

H cuba Gu de these aged steps, my ser ants, forth bef re th house s pport your f llow sla e your queen of yore ye maids of Tro Take hold pon my aged hand s pport m guide me lift me up and I will lea upon your bended arm as on a staff and qu ken my halt ng footsteps onwards. O dazzl ng li ht f Zeus! O gloom of n ht! why am I thus sca ed by fea ful v sions of the n ht? O ea th dread queen mother of dreams that fl t on sable wi gs! I am seeking to a ert the ision f the night th sight of horror which I saw so clearly in my dreams touch n my son who is safe i Thrace and Polyx na m dau hter dear Ye gods of this land! p eserve my son th last and only a hor of my house now settled n Thrace the land f snow safe th keepi g of his father friend Some fresh disaster is in sto a new strain of sorrow will be added to ou woe Such ceaseless thrill of terror ne r wrung m hea t bef Oh! where, ye Trojan maid ns, can I find inspired H lenus or Cassandra that th y may read me my d eam? For I saw a dappled hind ma gled b a wolf b oody fangs, t rn from m k ees by f rce n piteous w se. And th too filled me w th affright o er th summit of hi t mb appeared A hilles pha tom, and for his gu do he would ha e o of the luckless maids of T oy Wheref e I impl e you, power di ine a ert this horror from my daughter from my child

Er er CHO US O C PTIVE TROJAN WOMEN

Chorus Hec ba I ha e hastened away to thee, lea ing my mast s tent wher the lot assigned me

Polysena is said to ha been betrothed t Achilles.

sorrow! Oh! to reach a spot where cursed Cithæron ne'er shall see me more nor I Cithæron with mine eyes, where no memorial of the thyrsus is set up! Be they to other Bacchantes dear!

Ch. Many are the forms the heavenly will assumes, and many a thing the gods fulfil contrary to all hope; that which was expected is not brought to pass, while for the unlooked for Heaven finds out a way. E'en such hath been the issue here.

Exeunt omnes

He. Didst thou embrace m knees in all humility?

Od. Yes so that m hand rew dead and cold upon thy robe

He. What said t thou then when in my power?

Od. Doubtless I f und plenty to sa to sa e m life

H. Was t I that s ed and sent thee forth again?

Od. Thou did s and so I t ll behold the li ht of da

H. Art not thou th n pla ing a sorry part to plot against m thus, after th kind treatment thou did t by thy own confession eceiv from me, show i me no grat tud but all th ul thou canst? A thankless t d ye who co et honour from the mob for your oratory Oh that ye were unknown to me! e who harm your friends and think no more of t, if ye can but say a word to win the mob But tell me, what kind of cleverness did they think it, when gainst this child they passed their bloody vot ? Was t duty led them to slay a human ictim t th tomb, wher sacrifice of oxen more befit ? or does A hilles, if claim the li es of those who slew him as his recompense show his justice by markin her out for death? No! she t least n er injured him. H should ha e demanded H len as a v ctim t his tomb, for she t was that pro ed h ru n, bringing him to Troy or if some captive of surpass in bea ty as to be si gled out for d oom this pointed not t us for the dau hter of Tynda eus wa fairer than all womankind, and her injury to him was pr ed n less than ours. Again t the justice of his plea I put this argument Now hear th recompense d from thee to m at m request On th own confession, thou didst fall at m feet and embrace m hand and a ed cheek I in my turn now d the same t thee and laim the fa our then bestowed and I implore th e tear not my child from my arms, nor sla h r There be dead enou h she is m only j in her I forget m sorrow m comfort she in pla e of many a loss, my city and my n rse my staff ed journe s guide 'Tis ne er ri ht that those powe should use t out of season, or when prosperous suppose th will be alwa s so. For I lik them wa prosperous once but now my lif is h ed, and on da robbed me of ll my bliss. Friend by th beard ha e some egard and pity for me go to Achaea's host and talk them over to r how hateful a thi g t s to sla women whom t first spared out of pit aft r dra ing them from th altars. For amongst ou the self same law hold good for bond and free alike respect g blood hed such i fluence a thin will persuad them even thou h thy words r weak for the sam argument when proceeding from those of no ccou t has not he same force hen t uttered by men f mark

Ch. Human natu e is not so stony hearted as to bear th plai tive tale and catalogue f sorrows, hout sheddi g a tear.

Od. O Hecuba! be schooled by me, nor in thy passion count him foe who speak th wisely Th L. I am prepared sa e f r th service I received I sa no otherw se But what I said to all I w ll not now d ny that after Troy s capture I would gi e thy dau hter to th chiefest of our host because he a ked a victim. For herein is a source of weakness to most states, whene er a man of bra e and generous soul recei es no g eater honour than h s i feriors. Now A hilles, lad deserves honou at our hands, since for H llas he died as nobl as a mortal can. Is n t th a foul reproach to treat a man as a friend in life, but when he is gone from us, to treat him so no more? How now? what will they sa if once more th e comes a gathering of the host and a contest with the foe? "Shall we fi ht or nurse our li es, seein the dead ha e no honours?" For m self in deed though in l fe my da ly store were scant yet would it be all sufficient but a touching a tomb I should wish mine to be n object of respect for this grat tude has lon to run. Thou speakest of cruel sufferings hear my nswer Amongst us are a ed dames and grey old men no less miserable than thou, and brides of gallant husband reft o er whom this Trojan dust has closed Endure these sorrows for us, if we are wron n resol ing to honour the brave we shall brin upon oursel es a charge of ignorance but as for ou ba barians, regard not your friends a such and pay no honou e to your gallant dead, that Hellas may prosper and ye ma reap the fruits of such pol cy

Ch. Ala ! how cursed s slavery alway *in its nature* forced b the might of the stronger to endure unseemly t eatment

H. Daughter my plead g to avert thy bloody death was wa ted a on the a r do thou, if in aught endowed with greater power to mo e than thy mo her make ha te to use it uttering every pleadi g note lik the tuneful n ghtingale to sa e thy soul from death. Throw th self at Od sseus knees to mo e hi pity and try to move him. Here is thy plea he too hath children, so that he can feel for thy sad fate

Polyx. Od sseus, I see thee hid n thy right hand beneath th robe and turning away thy face that I ma not touch th beard T ke heart thou art safe from the sup liant s god n my case for I will follow thee alik because I mu t and because it is my wish t d for wer I loth, a oward should I show myself, woman faint of heart Why should I prolong my days? I whose sire was king of all the Phrygians—my chi fest pride n life Then was I nursed on fair fond h pes to be a bride for kings, the centre of keen jealousy amongst suitors, t see whose hom I would make my own and o r each dame of Ida I was q een ah me! maiden marked amid h r f llows, equal t goddess, save for death alon but now a sla e That name first makes me lon for death so strange t sound and then may be my lot might gi e me to some sa a e ma ter one that would buy m *f r money*—me the sister of Hector and many another chief—who would mak me knead him bread within h s halls, or sweep his house or set me workin t the loom, lead n lif of misery whil some sla e bought I know not whence, will

as his appointed slave in the day that I was driven from the city of Ilium hunted by Achæans thence at the point of the spear no alleviation bring I for thy sufferings nay I have laden myself with heavy news and am a herald of sorrow to thee lady 'Tis said the Achæans have determined in full assembly to offer thy daughter in sacrifice to Achilles for thou knowest how one day he appeared standing on his tomb in golden harness and stayed the sea borne barques though they had their sails already hoisted with this pealing cry Whither away so fast ye Danai leaving my tomb without its *prize*? There on arose a violent dispute with stormy altercation and opinion was divided in the warrior host of Hellas some being in favour of offering the sacrifice at the tomb others dissenting There was Agamemnon all eagerness in thy interest, because of his love for the frenzied prophetess but the two sons of Theseus scions of Athens though supporting different proposals yet agreed on the same decision which was to crown Achilles tomb with fresh spilt blood for they said they never would set Cassandra s love before Achilles valour Now the zeal of the rival disputants was almost equal until that shifty smooth mouthed varlet the son of Laertes whose tongue is ever at the service of the mob persuaded the army not to put aside the best of all the Danai for want of a bond maid s sacrifice nor have it said by any of the dead that stand beside Persephone The Danai have left the plains of Troy without one thought of gratitude for their brethren who died for Hellas Odysseus will be here in an instant to drag the tender maiden from thy breast and tear her from thy aged arms To the temples to the altars with thee! at Agamemnon s knees throw thyself as a suppliant! Invoke alike the gods in heaven and those beneath the earth For either shall thy prayers avail to spare thee the loss of thy unhappy child or thou must live to see thy daughter fall before the tomb her crimson blood spurting in deep dark jets from her neck with gold encircled

He Woe woe is me! What words or cries or lamentations can I utter? Ah me! for the sorrows of my closing years! for slavery too cruel to brook or bear! Woe woe is me! What champion have I? Sons and city—where are they? Aged Priam is no more no more my children now Which way am I to go or this or that? Whither shall I turn my steps? Where is any god or power divine to succour me? Ah Trojan maids! bringers of evil tidings! messengers of woe! ye have made an end an utter end of me life on earth has no more charm for me Ah! luckless steps lead on guide your aged mistress to yon tent My child come forth come forth thou daughter of the queen of sorrows listen to thy mother s voice my child that thou mayst know the hideous rumour I now hear about thy life

Enter POLYXENA

Polyxena O mother mother mine! why dost thou call so loud? what news is it thou hast proclaimed scaring me like a cowering bird from my chamber by this alarm?

He Alas my daughter!

Polyx Why this ominous address? it bodeth sorrow for me

He Woe for thy life!

Polyx Tell all hide it no longer Ah mother! how I dread ay dread the import of thy loud laments

He Ah my daughter! a luckless mother s child!

Polyx Why dost thou tell me this?

He The Argives with one consent are eager for thy sacrifice to the son of Peleus at his tomb

Polyx Ah! mother mine! how canst thou speak of such a dire mischance? Yet tell me all yes all O mother dear!

He Tis a rumour ill boding I tell my child they bring me word that sentence is passed upon thy life by the Argives vote

Polyx Alas for thy cruel sufferings! my persecuted mother! woe for thy life of grief! What grievous outrage some fiend hath sent thee hateful horrible! No more shall I thy daughter share thy bondage *hapless youth on hapless age attending* For thou alas! wilt see thy hapless child torn from thy arms as a calf of the hills is torn from its mother and sent beneath the darkness of the earth with severed throat for Hades where with the dead shall I be laid ah me! For thee I weep with plaintive wail mother doomed to a life of sorrow! for my own life its ruin and its outrage never a tear I shed nay death is become to me a happier lot than life

Ch See where Odysseus comes in haste to announce some fresh command to thee Hecuba

Enter ODYSSEUS

Odysseus Lady methinks thou knowest already the intention of the host and the vote that has been passed still will I declare it It is the Achæans will to sacrifice thy daughter Polyxena at the mound heaped o er Achilles grave and they appoint me to take the maid and bring her thither while the son of Achilles is chosen to preside o er the sacrifice and act as priest Dost know then what to do? Be not forcibly torn from her nor match thy might gainst mine recognize the limits of thy strength, and the presence of thy troubles Even in adversity tis wise to yield to reason s dictates

He Ah me! an awful trial is nigh it seems, fraught with mourning rich in tears Yes I too escaped death where death had been my due and Zeus destroyed me not but is still preserving my life that I may witness in my misery fresh sorrows surpassing all before Still if the bond may ask the free of things that grieve them not nor wrench their heart strings tis well that thou shouldst make an end and hearken to my questioning

Od Granted put thy questions that short delay I grudge thee not

He Dost remember the day thou camest to spy on Ilium disguised in rags and tatters while down thy cheek ran drops of blood?

Od Remember it! yes twas no slight impression it made upon my heart

He Did Helen recognize thee and tell me only?

Od I well remember the awful risk I ran

I upon a foreign shore am called a slave forsooth lea ing Asia Eur pe s handmaid and receivi g in its place a deadly ma riage bower

Enter T LTHY IUS

Talthybius Where can I find Hecuba who once was queen of Ilium, ye Trojan maidens?

Ch There sh lies near thee Talthybius, stretched full length upon the ground wrapt in her robe

Ta Great Zeus! what can I say? that thine eye is o er man? or that we hold thi false opinio all to no purpose thinking there is any race of gods, when it is chance that rules the mortal sphere? Was not this th queen of wealthy Phrygia the wife of Priam h hly blest? And now her city is utte ly o erthrown by the foe, and she a sla in h r old age her chil d en dead l es t etched pon the ground soilin h r hair poo lady! in th dust Well, w ll old s I am, may death be my lot before I am in olved in a y foul mischan Arise poor queen! lift up thy self nd raise that hoa y head

H Ah! who art thou that wilt not let my body rest? h disturb m in m anguish whosoe er thou art?

T 'Tis I Talthybi s, who am here the minister of the Danai Agamemnon has sent me for thee lad

H Good friend art com because the Achæans are resol ed to slay me too at the gra e? How wel come would thy tidings be! Let us hasten and lose no t m prithee lead the way old si

T I am come to fetch thee to bury thy daugh ter s corpse lady and those that send me are the t o sons f Atreus and th Achæan host

H Ah! what w lt thou say? Art thou n t come as I had thou ht to fetch m to my doom but to announce ill news? Lost lost, my hild! snatched from thy moth s arms! and I am childless now at least a touches thee ah woe is m !

How d d ye end her life? was any mercy shown? or did y deal ruthlessly w th h r as though your victim were a foe old man? Speak, though thy ords must be pain t me

T Lady thou art be t on making mine a double meed of tear pity f thy ch ld f r now too as I t ll th sad tal tear will wet my eye as it did at th t mb h n h was dyin

All A hæa host was gathered th re in full a ray before th tomb to see thy daughter offered and h son f A hilles took Polyxena b the hand and set her on th top of the mound, whil I stood ear nd a hosen band of you g Achæa f llowed to hold thy child nd p e e t her strug ling Then did A hilles son take i hi hands a brimmin cup of gold nd pou ed an ff rin t his dead si makin gn t me t procla m sile ce th oughout th A hæa host So I tood at his sid nd in their m dst procla med Sil nce ye A hæan ! hushed be th people !!! peace! be till! Th ew th l hushed the host Th pake h Son of P l s, fath r min e pt th ff rin I pou thee to appease thy pirit t ng t raise the dead and com to drink the bla k blood f irgin pu which I and th host are offering thee oh! be propitious to us grant that we may loose our prows and the cables of our ships, and meeting with a prosperous voyage from Ilium all to our country come So he and all the a my echoed his prayer Then seizing his golden sword by the hilt he drew it from its scabbard sign ing the while to the picked young Arg e warriors to hold the maid But she when she was ware there of uttered her voice and said O Argives, who ha e sacked my city! of my free will I die let none lay hand on me for bra ely will I yield my neck. Leave me free I do beseech so slay me that death may find me free for to be called a slave amongst the dead fill my royal heart with shame" Thereat the peopl shouted their applause and king Aga memnon bade the young men loose the maid. So they set her free as soon as they heard this last com mand from him whose might was o er all. And she hearing her captors words took her robe and tore it open from the shoulder to the waist d splaying a breast and bosom fair a a statue s then sinking on her knee one word she spake more piteous than all the rest "Young prince if tis my breast thou dst strike, lo! here it is, strike home! or if at my neck thy sword thou lt a m, behold! that neck is bared"

Then he half glad half sorry in h s pity for the maid cleft with the steel the channels of her breath and streams of blood gushed forth but she e en in death s agony took good heed to fall with maiden grace hiding from gaze of man what modest maiden must Soon a she had breathed her last through the fatal ga h each Arg e set his hand to different ta ks, some strewing leaves o er the corpse in hand fuls, others bring ng pine logs and heaping up a pyre and he who brought nothing would hear from him who did such ta nts as these "Stand st thou still ignoble wretch with never a robe or ornament to bri g for the ma den? Wilt thou give naught to her that showed such peerles bra ery and spirit?

Such is the tale I tell about thy daughter s death, and I regard thee as blest beyond all mothers in thy noble ch ld yet crossed in fortune more than all

Ch Upon the race of Priam and my city some fearful urse hath burst tis sent by God and we must bea it

He O my daught r! mid th s crowd of sorrows I know n t where t tu n my gaze for if I set my self to o e a ther will not give m pause while from this agai fresh gri f s mmons me finding a su cessor to sorrow s throne No longer now can I efface f om my mind the memory of thy sufferings suffic ently t stay my tears yet hath the story of thy n bl death taken from the keenness of my grief I t n t th n strange that poor land when blessed by heaven with a lucky year yi lds a good crop while that which s good if robbed of needful care bears but little increase yet mongst m n the knav is ver other than a kna e the good man ught but good e r cha ging for the worse be cause of misf rtu b t e er th sam ? Is then the differe ce due to birth or brin g up? Good train g do btless gives lessons in good conduct and if

taint my maiden charms once deemed worthy of royalty No never! Here I close my eyes upon the light free as yet and dedicate myself to Hades Lead me hence Odysseus and do thy worst for I see naught within my reach to make me hope or expect with any confidence that I am ever again to be happy Mother mine! seek not to hinder me by word or deed but join in my wish for death ere I meet with shameful treatment undeserved For whoso *is not used to taste of sorrow s cup* though he bears it yet it galls him when he puts his neck within the yoke far happier would he be dead than alive for life of honour reft is toil and trouble

Ch A wondrous mark most clearly stamped doth noble birth imprint on men and the name goeth still further where it is deserved

He A noble speech my daughter! but there is sorrow linked with its noble sentiments

Odysseus if ye must pleasure the son of Peleus and avoid reproach slay not this maid but lead me to Achilles pyre and torture me unsparingly twas I that bore Paris whose fatal shaft laid low the son of Thetis

Od Tis not thy death old dame Achilles wraith hath demanded of the Achæans but hers

He At least then slaughter me with my child so shall there be a double draught of blood for the earth and the dead that claims this sacrifice

Od The maiden s death suffices no need to add a second to the first would we needed not even this!

He Die with my daughter I must and will

Od How so? I did not know I had a master

He I will cling to her like ivy to an oak

Od Not if thou wilt hearken to those who are wiser than thyself

He Be sure I will never willingly relinquish my child

Od Well be equally sure I will never go away and leave her here

Polyx Mother hearken to me and thou son of Laertes make allowance for a parent s natural wrath My poor mother fight not with our masters Wilt thou be thrown down be roughly thrust aside and wound thy aged skin and in unseemly wise be torn from me by youthful arms? This wilt thou suffer do not so for tis not right for thee Nay dear mother mine! give me thy hand beloved and let me press thy cheek to mine for never nevermore but now for the last time shall I behold the dazzling sun god s orb My last farewells now take! O mother mother mine! beneath the earth I pass

He O my daughter I am still to live and be a slave

Polyx Unwedded I depart never having tasted the married joys that were my due!

He Thine my daughter is a piteous lot and sad is mine also

Polyx There in Hades courts shall I be laid apart from thee

He Ah me what shall I do? where shall I end my life?

Polyx Daughter of a free born sire a slave I am to die

He Not one of all my fifty children left!

Polyx What message can I take for thee to Hector or thy aged lord?

He Tell them that of all women I am the most miserable

Polyx Ah! breast and paps that fed me with sweet food!

He Woe is thee my child for this untimely fate!

Polyx Farewell my mother! farewell Cassandra!

He Fare well! others do but not thy mother no!

Polyx Thou too my brother Polydore who art in Thrace the home of steeds!

He Aye if he lives which much I doubt so luckless am I every way

Polyx Oh yes he lives and when thou diest he will close thine eyes

He I *am* dead sorrow has forestalled death here.

Polyx *Come veil my head* Odysseus and take me hence for now ere falls the fatal blow my heart is melted by my mother s wailing and hers no less by mine O light of day! for still may I call thee by thy name though now my share in thee is but the time I take to go twixt this and the sword at Achilles tomb *Exeunt* ODYSSEUS *and* POLYXENA

He Woe is me! I faint my limbs sink under me O my daughter embrace thy mother stretch out thy hand give it me again leave me not childless! Ah friends! tis my death blow Oh! to see that Spartan woman Helen sister of the sons of Zeus in such a plight for her bright eyes have caused the shameful fall of Troy s once prosperous town

She swoons

Ch O breeze from out the deep arising that waftest swift galleys ocean s coursers across the surging main whither wilt thou bear me the child of sorrow? To whose house shall I be brought to be his slave and chattel? to some haven in the Dorian land [1] or in Phthia where men say Apidanus father of fairest streams makes fat and rich the tilth? or to an island home sent on a voyage of misery by oars that sweep the brine leading a wretched existence in halls where[2] the first created palm and the bay tree put forth their sacred shoots for dear Latona memorial fair of her divine travail? and there with the maids of Delos shall I hymn the golden snood and bow of Artemis their goddess? or in the city of Pallas the home of Athena of the beauteous chariot shall I upon her saffron robe[3] yoke horses to the car embroidering them on my web in brilliant varied shades or the race of Titans whom Zeus the son of Cronos lays to their unending sleep with bolt of flashing flame?

Woe is me for my children! woe for my *ancestors*, and my country which is falling in smouldering ruin mid the smoke sacked by the Argive spear! while

[1]The Pelopo esus

[2]Delos.

[3]The mbro d red robe presented to this goddess at the Panath n ea

that none of the Argives should touch thy ch ld And so I gra ted this, and none is touching her but this lon d lay of thine fills me with wonder Where fo e am I come to send thee t ence for our part th re is well perf rmed therein there be any place for well

Ha! what man is th I see near the tents, some T ojan s corpse? t s r t n A g es body tha the garments t is clad in tell m

H (Aside) Unhapp one! in nam n the I name m self O Hecuba what shall I do? th ow myself h re at Agamemno s knees, or bear my sorrows in silence?

Ag Why dost th u turn thy back towards me and weep refusi g t say what ha happened or who this is?

H (Aside) But should h count me as a sla and foe and spurn m from his knees, I should b t add t my anguish.

Ag I am no p ophet bo n wherefore if I be not told I cannot lea n th cu rent of thy thoughts.

H (Aside) Can t be that in est mating thus man s feelings I make him ut too ll-di posed wh en he is n t really so?

Ag If thy wish really s that I sho ld remai in ignorance we re of on m d for I ha e no h m self to listen

H (Aside) Without h a d I shall not be able to enge my childre Wh d I still ponder th mat t r I must do ndda whether I w or lose (Turn g t wou him o) O Agamemnon! b thy knees, by th beard a d co q eri g hand I implore the

Ag What is thy desire? t be set free? that is easil d

H N t that g e me e eance on th w cked od ermore am I willin to lead lif of slavery

Ag Well but why dost th u call me to thy a d

He T a matt r thou l ttl reckest f O kin Dost see this c rpse f r wh m my tear now flow

Ag I d b t wh t t follow I cann t g ess.

H H as my ch ld t da s go b I bore him m omb

Ag Whi h of thy son h poo suffere ?

H N t one of P iam s r ce h f ll neath Ilium s al

Ag Had t ou a y so besides those lads

H Yes, h m thou seest he of whom methi ks, b mad ga

Ag Wh th n w t h his city was being dest o ed

H His fath f a ful f h de th co eyed him out f T o

Ag Wh d d h pla e him apart f om all the sor be th had?

H H r n thi ery land her his c rpse was found

Ag With Pol mest r the k of this country?

H H the wa h sent ha of g d most bitte trust!

Ag By whom was he slai ? what death o ertook him?

He By whom but by th s man? His Thracian host sle h m

A Th wretch! could he ha e been so eager for the treas re?

He E en so soon as e er he heard of the Phryg a s d sa ter

Ag Whe e d d t find h m? or d d some one bring h s corpse?

He Th s maid who chanced upon it on the sea sh re

Ag Was t e seeking it or bent on other ta ks?

He She had gone to fetch water from the sea to wa h Polyxena

Ag It seems then h s host slew h m and cast his bod out t sea

He Aye for the waves to toss after ma gling him thu

Ag Woe is thee for thy measureless troubles!

H I am ru ned no evil now s left O Agam m n

A Look you! what woman was e er born to such m fortune?

He There is none unless th u would t name mis-f rtu e h self But hear my reason f r throwing myself at thy knees. If my treatm t seems to thee deser ed I will be content but if otherwise help me to pun sh this most godless host that hath wrought a deed most dam ed fearless al ke of god in hea n or hell who, th ugh f ll oft he had shared my board and been cou ted first of all my guest fri nds and after meetin with e ery kindness he could cla m and r cei ing my co sid rat on slew my son and bent though he wa on murder deigned not to bury him but ca t h body fo th to sea

I may be a sla and weak as well but the gods a e stron and custom too which pre a ls o er th m f by cu tom t s that w beli e in them and set up bounds of right and wrong fo our lives. Now if th s pr ciple when ref rred to thee is to be set at naught and they a e to escape pun shment who mu der guests or d re to plunder the temples of gods, then a ll fairness in things human at an end Deem this th n d grace and show reward for me, ha pity on me and like an a tist stand ng back fr m his picture look o me nd closely scan my piteous st te I was once a q en but n w I am thy sla e happy moth r o c but now ch ldless and old al k reft of city utterl forlorn the most w etc ed woman l n Ah! woe s me! whith r would t thou w thdraw thy steps from me? (As Ag t ur o sturn g ay) My ff t then w ll be in a h me! h me! Wh oh! why d we mortals toil as needs w mu t and seek out all othe sci ences, but pe su on the nly real mi tres of man k d w take no further pa ns to mast r c mpletely by offerin to pa for the knowledg so that ny man m ght upon occasi n conv nc his fellows as he pleased and gain his po t s well? How shall yone h reaft r h pe for prospe ty? All those my son a gone f om me nd I the moth r am led away nto capt its t suff r shame fi le y nder I see th sm ke leap g up o r my city Further thou h

a man have mastered this he knows what is base by the standard of good Random shafts of my soul's shooting these I know

(*To* TALTHYBIUS) Go thou and proclaim to the Argives that they touch not my daughter's body but keep the crowd away For when a countless host is gathered the mob knows no restraint and the unruliness of sailors exceeds that of fire all abstinence from crime being counted criminal

Exit TALTHYBIUS

(*Addressing a servant*) My aged handmaid take a pitcher and dip it in the salt sea and bring hither thereof that I for the last time may wash my child a virgin wife a widowed maid and lay her out—as she deserves ah! whence can I? impossible! but as best I can and what will that amount to? I will collect adornment from the captives my companions in these tents if haply any of them escaping her master's eye have some secret store from her old home O towering halls O home so happy once O Priam rich in store of fairest wealth most blest of sires and I no less the grey haired mother of thy race how are we brought to naught stripped of our former pride! And spite of all we vaunt ourselves one on the riches of his house another because he has an honoured name amongst his fellow citizens! But these things are naught in vain are all our thoughtful schemes in vain our vaunting words He is happiest who meets no sorrow in his daily walk *Exit* HECUBA

Ch Woe and tribulation were made my lot in life soon as ever Paris felled his beams of pine in Ida's woods to sail across the heaving main in quest of Helen's hand fairest bride on whom the sun god turns his golden eye For here beginneth trouble's cycle and worse than that relentless fate and from one man's folly came a universal curse bringing death to the land of Simois with trouble from an alien shore The strife the shepherd decided on Ida 'twixt three daughters of the blessed gods brought as its result war and bloodshed and the ruin of my home and many a Spartan maiden too is weeping bitter tears in her halls on the banks of fair Eurotas and many a mother whose sons are slain is smiting her hoary head and tearing her cheeks making her nails red in the furrowed gash

Enter MAID

Maid (*Attended by bearers bringing in a covered corpse*) Oh! where ladies is Hecuba our queen of sorrow who far surpasses all in tribulation men and women both alike? None shall wrest the crown from her

Ch What now thou wretched bird of boding note? Thy evil tidings never seem to rest

Ma 'Tis to Hecuba I bring my bitter news no easy task is it for mortal lips to speak smooth words in sorrow's hour

Ch Lo! she is coming even now from the shelter of the tent appearing just in time to hear thee speak

Re enter HECUBA.

Ma Alas for thee! most hapless queen ruined beyond all words of mine to tell robbed of the light of life of children husband city reft hopelessly undone!

He This is no news but insult I have heard it all before But why art thou come bringing hither to me the corpse of Polyxena on whose burial Achæa's host was reported to be busily engaged?

Ma (*Aside*) She little knows what I have to tell but mourns Polyxena not grasping her new sorrows.

He Ah! woe is me! thou art not surely bringing hither mad Cassandra the prophetic maid?

Ma She lives of whom thou speakest but the dead thou dost not weep is here (*Uncovering the corpse*) Mark well the body now laid bare is not this a sight to fill thee with wonder and upset thy hopes?

He Ah me! 'tis the corpse of my son Polydore I behold whom he of Thrace was keeping safe for me in his halls Alas! this is the end of all my life is o'er O my son my son alas for thee! a frantic strain I now begin thy fate I learnt a moment gone from some foul fiend [1]

Ma What! so thou knewest thy son's fate poor lady

He I cannot cannot credit this fresh sight I see Woe succeeds to woe time will never cease henceforth to bring me groans and tears.

Ch Alas! poor lady our sufferings are cruel indeed

He O my son child of a luckless mother what was the manner of thy death? what lays thee dead at my feet? Who did the deed?

Ma I know not On the sea shore I found him

He Cast up on the smooth sand or thrown there after the murderous blow?

Ma The waves had washed him ashore

He Alas! alas! I read aright the vision I saw in my sleep nor did the phantom dusky winged escape my ken even the vision I saw concerning my son who is now no more within the bright sunshine

Ch Who slew him then? Can thy dream lore tell us that?

He 'Twas my own familiar friend the knight of Thrace with whom his aged sire had placed the boy in hiding

Ch O horror! what wilt thou say? did he slay him to get the gold?

He O awful crime! O deed without a name! beggaring wonder! impious! intolerable! Where are now the laws 'twixt guest and host? Accursed monster! how hast thou mangled his flesh slashing the poor child's limbs with ruthless sword lost to all sense of pity!

Ch Alas for thee! how some deity whose hand is heavy on thee hath sent thee troubles beyond all other mortals! But yonder I see our lord and master Agamemnon coming so let us be still henceforth my friends

Enter AGAMEMNON

Agamemnon Hecuba why art thou delaying to come and bury thy daughter? for it was for this that Talthybius brought me thy message begging

[1] i.e. in a dream.

and thy daught r lately slain Alas! there is nau ht to be reli d on fair fame s insecure not is there any guara. tee that weal will not be turned to woe For the gods confound our fortunes, tossing them to and fro, and i troduce c nfusion that our perplexity may make us worship them. But what boot it to bemoan these things, whe it brings one no nearer to heading the trouble? If thou art blaming me at all for my absence, stay a mome t I was away in the very heart of Thr ce wh n thou wast brought hither but on my return just as I wa starting fr m m home for the same purpose thy ma d f ll in with me and gav me thy messa e wh h brought me here t once

He Polymesto I am hold n n such wretched pl ht that I bl sh to meet thine eye for my present evil case makes me ashamed to face thee who didst see me in happie days, and I cannot look on thee with unfalterin gaze Do n t then think it ill ill on my part Pol mestor there is another c se as well I mean the custom which forbids ome to meet me s gaz

Po ym. N wonder surel But what need hast thou of me? Why didst send for me to come hither from my house?

H I wish to t ll thee and thy child *on a pri ate* matter of m own prithee, bid thy attendants withdraw from the t nt.

Polym (*T h Attendants*) Retire this desert spot is saf enough. (*T HECUBA*) Thou art my friend nd this A hæan host is well di posed t me But thou must tell m how prosperity is to succour its unl ky friend for ready am I t do so

H First tell me I the child Pol dore whom thou art keepin in thy halls, *rec ed from* me and his father is he y t al e? Th rest will I ask thee after that

Pol m Yes, thou still hast a hare in fortune there.

H Well said dear friend! how worth of thee!

P lym What ext would t lea n *of m* ?

He Hath h any recollection f m h mother?

Polym Aye, he was l n ing t steal away hither to thee

H Is the gold saf which h b ught with him from T oy?

P l m Saf under lock and k y in my halls.

H There keep it but covet not thy ne ghbour s goods.

P lym. N t I God grant me luck of what I have lad !

H Dost know what I w h to say *to thee and th children*?

P l m Not t th words may be will declare it

H Ma t grow a dear to th e as thou now art to me!

Polym What is t that I and my children are to learn?

H Ther be anci nt vault filled full of g ld by P iam I e.

Pol m Is it this thou would t t ll th son?

He Yes, by thy lips, for thou rt a righteous man.

Polym What need then of these children s pres ence?

He 'Tis better they should know *it in* case of thy death

Polym True tis also the wiser wa

He W ll dost thou know where stands the shrine of Trojan Ath na?

Polym Is the gold there? *what is there to mark it?*

He A black rock rising above the ground

Polym Is there aught else thou wouldst tell me about the place?

He I wi h to keep safe the treasure I brou ht from Tro

P lym Where can it be? inside thy dress, or ha t thou it hidden?

He 'Tis safe am d a heap of spoils within these tents.

Polym Where? This is the stat on built by the Achæans to surround their fleet

He The capti e women ha e huts of their own

Polym Is it safe to enter? are the e no men about?

He There are no Achæans with n *we are alone* Enter then the tent for the Argives are eager to set sail from Troy for home and when thou hast ac complished all that is appointed thee thou shalt return with thy ch ldren to that bourn where thou hast lodged my son.

Exit HECUBA *wi h* POLYMESTO *and h s child en.*

Ch Not yet ha t thou paid the penalty but may be thou y t wilt like one who sl ps and falls into the surge w th no ha en near so shalt thou lose thy own l fe fo the lif thou ha t taken. Fo where liability to just ce coincides with hea en s law there is ru n fraught with death and doom Thy hopes of this jou ney shall cheat thee for it hath led thee, unhappy wret h! to the hall of death and to no warrior s hand shalt thou resi n th life

Polym (*W thin the tent*) O horror! I am blinded of the l ght of my eyes, ah me!

Ch Heard ye friends, that Thracian s cry of woe?

Polym (*W thin*) O horror! horror! my children! O the cruel blow

Ch Fri nds, there s strange mischi f afoot in yon tent

Polym (*W thin*) Nay ye hall neve escape for all your h ried flight for with my f st will I burst open the inmost recesses of this bu ld n

Ch Hark! how he launches pond ous blows! Shall we fo c an entry? The crisi calls on us t aid Hecuba a d the Trojan women

Enter HECU

H Str k on spa e not b rst the doors! thou shalt ne r repla e b ght vision thy e es nor ever see thy hildren wh m I ha e slai l e again.

Ch What! hast thou foiled the Th acian and is th trang in thy power mi t ess mine? is all thy threat now brought to pas ?

He A moment and thou shalt see him before the tent his eyes put out with ndom step ad ancin a blind man must yea and th bod es of his two children hom I ith my bra e daughters of Troy

perhaps this were idly urged to plead thy love still will I put the case at thy side lies my daughter Cassandra the maid inspired as the Phrygians call her How then O king wilt thou acknowledge those nights of rapture or what return shall she my daughter or I her mother have for all the love she has lavished on her lord? For from darkness and the *endearments of the night mortals reap by far their* keenest joys Hearken then dost see this corpse? By doing him a service thou wilt do it to a kinsman of thy bride s One thing only have I yet to urge Oh! would I had a voice in arms in hands in hair and feet placed there by th arts of Dædalus or *some god* that all together they might with tears embrace thy knees bringing a thousand pleas to bear on thee! O my lord and master most glorious light of Hellas listen stretch forth a helping hand to this aged woman for all she is a thing of naught still do so For tis ever a good man s duty to suc*cour the right and to punish evil doers wherever* found

Ch Tis strange how each extreme doth meet in human life! Custom determines even our natural ties making the most bitter foes friends and regarding as foes those who formerly were friends

Ag Hecuba *I feel compassion for thee and thy* son and thy ill fortune as well as for thy suppliant gesture and I would gladly see yon impious host pay thee this forfeit for the sake of heaven and justice could I but find some way to help thee without appearing to the army to have plotted the death of the Thracian king for Cassandra s sake *For on one* point I am assailed by perplexity the army count this man their friend the dead their foe that he is dear to thee is a matter apart wherein the army has no share Reflect on this for though thou find st me ready to share thy toil and quick to lend my aid *yet the risk of being reproached* by the Achæans makes me hesitate

He Ah! there is not in the world a single man free for he is either a slave to money or to fortune or else the people in their thousands or the fear of *public prosecution prevents him from following the* dictates of his heart

But since thou art afraid deferring too much to the rabble I will rid thee of that fear Thus be privy to my plot if I devise mischief against this murderer but refrain from any share in it And if there break out among the Achæans any uproar or attempt at rescue when the Thracian is suffering his doom check it though without seeming to do so on my account For what remains take heart I will arrange every thing well

Ag How? what wilt thou do? wilt take a sword in thy old hand and slay the barbarian or hast thou drugs or what to help thee? Who will take thy part? whence wilt thou procure friends?

He Sheltered beneath these tents is a host of Trojan women

Ag Dost mean the captives the booty of the Hellenes?

He With their help will I punish my murderous foe

Ag How are women to master men?

He Numbers are a fearful thing and joined to craft a desperate foe

Ag True still I have a mean opinion of the female race

He What? did not women slay the sons of Ægyptus and utterly clear Lemnos of men? But let it be *even thus put an end to our conference and send* this woman for me safely through the host And do thou (*to a servant*) draw near my Thracian friend and say Hecuba once queen of Ilium s mmons thee on thy own business no less than hers, thy children too for they also must hear what she has *to say Defer awhile Agamemnon the burial of* Polyxena lately slain that brother and sister may be laid on the same pyre and buried side by side a double cause of sorrow to their mother

Ag So shall it be yet had the host been able to sail I could not have granted th e this boon but *as it is since the god sends forth no favouring breeze we needs must abide seeing* as we do that sailing is at a standstill Good luck to thee! for this is the interest alike of individual and state that the wrong doer be punished and the good man prosper

Exit AGAMEMNON

Ch No more my native Ilium shalt thou be counted among the towns ne er sacked so thick a cloud of Hellene troops is settling all around wasting thee with the spear shorn art thou of thy coronal of towers and fouled most piteously with filthy soot no more ah me! shall I tread thy streets

Twas in the middle of the night my ruin cam in the hour when sleep steals sweetly o er the eyes after the feast is done My husband the music o er and the sacrifice that sets the dance afoot now ended was lying in our bridal-chamber his spear hung on a peg with never a thou ht of the sailor throng encamped upon the Trojan shores and I was braiding up my tresses neath a tight drawn snood before my golden mirror s countless rays that I might lay me down to rest when lo! through the city rose a din and a cry went rin ing *down the streets of Troy* Ye sons of Hellas when oh! when will ye sack the citadel of Ilium and seek your homes? Up sprang I from my bed with only a mantle about m like a Dorian maid and sought in vain ah me! to station myself at the holy hearth of Artemis for after seeing my husband slain I w s hurried away o er the broad sea with many a backward look at my city when the ship began her homeward voyage and parted me from Ilium s strand till alas! for very grief I fainted cursin Helen the sister of the Dioscuri and Paris the baleful shepherd of Ida for twas their marriage whi h was no marriage but a curse by some demon sent that robbed me of my country and drove me from *my home Oh! may the sea s salt flood ne er carry* her home again and may she never set foot in her father s halls!

Enter POLYMESTOR *and his sons*

Polymestor My dear friend Priam and thou no less Hecuba I weep to see thee and thy city thus,

former times have spoken ill of women, if any doth so now or shall do so hereafter, all this in one short sentence will I say; for neither land or sea produces a race so pestilent, as whosoever hath had to do with them knows full well.

Ch. Curb thy bold tongue, and do not, because of thy own woes, thus embrace the whole race of women in one reproach; for though some of us, and those a numerous class, deserve to be disliked, there are others amongst us who rank naturally amongst the good.

Hec. Never ought words to have outweighed deeds in this world, Agamemnon. No! if a man's deeds had been good, so should his words have been; if, on the other hand, evil, his words should have betrayed their unsoundness, instead of its being possible at times to give a fair complexion to injustice. There are, 'tis true, clever persons, who have made a science of this, but their cleverness cannot last for ever; a miserable end awaits them; none ever yet escaped. This is a warning I give thee at the outset. Now will I turn to this fellow, and will give thee thy answer, thou who sayest it was to save Achæa double toil and for Agamemnon's sake that thou didst slay my son. Nay, villain, in the first place how could the barbarian race ever be friendly with Hellas? Impossible ever. Again, what interest hadst thou to further by thy zeal? was it to form some marriage, or on the score of kin, or prithee why? or was it likely that they would sail hither again and destroy thy country's crops? Whom dost thou expect to persuade into belief in that? Wouldst thou but speak the truth, it was the gold that slew my son, and thy greed of gain. Now tell me this; why, when Troy was victorious, when her rampart still stood round her, when Priam was alive, and Hector's warring prospered, why didst thou not, if thou wert really minded to do Agamemnon a service, then slay the child, for thou hadst him in thy palace 'neath thy care, or bring him with thee alive to the Argives? Instead of this, when our sun was set and the smoke of our city showed it was in the enemy's power, thou didst murder the guest who had come to thy hearth. Furthermore, to prove thy villainy, hear this; if thou wert really a friend to those Achæans, thou shouldst have brought the gold, which thou sayest thou art keeping not for thyself but for Agamemnon, and given it to them, for they were in need and had endured a long exile from their native land. Whereas not even now canst thou bring thyself to part with it, but persistest in keeping it in thy palace. Again, hadst thou kept my son safe and sound, as thy duty was, fair fame would have been thy reward, for it is in trouble that the good most clearly show their friendship; though prosperity of itself in every case finds friends. Wert thou in need of money and he prosperous, that son of mine would have been as a mighty treasure for thee to draw upon; but now thou hast him no longer to be thy friend, and the benefit of the gold is gone from thee, thy children too are dead, and thyself art in this sorry plight.

To thee Agamemnon I say, if thou help this man thou wilt show thy worthlessness; for thou wilt be serving one devoid of honour or piety, a stranger to the claims of good faith, a wicked host; while I shall say thou delightest in evil-doers, being such an one thyself; but I am not abusing my masters.

Ch. Look you! how good a cause ever affords men an opening for a good speech.

Ag. To be judge in a stranger's troubles goes much against my grain, but still I must; yea, for to take this matter in hand and then put it from me is a shameful course. My opinion, that thou mayst know, is that it was not for the sake of the Achæans or me that thou didst slay thy guest, but to keep that gold in thy own house. In thy trouble thou makest a case in thy own interests. Maybe among you 'tis a light thing to murder guests, but with us in Hellas 'tis a disgrace. How can I escape reproach if I judge thee not guilty? I cannot do it. Nay, since thou didst dare thy horrid crime, endure as well its painful consequence.

Polym. Woe is me! worsted by a woman and a slave, I am, it seems, to suffer by unworthy hands.

Hec. Is it not just for thy atrocious crime?

Polym. Ah, my children! ah, my blinded eyes! woe is me!

Hec. Dost thou grieve? what of me? thinkest thou I grieve not for my son?

Polym. Thou wicked wretch! thy delight is in mocking me.

Hec. I am avenged on thee; have I not cause for joy?

Polym. The joy will soon cease, in the day when ocean's flood—

Hec. Shall convey me to the shores of Hellas?

Polym. Nay, but close o'er thee when thou fallest from the masthead.

Hec. Who will force me to take the leap?

Polym. Of thy own accord wilt thou climb the ship's mast.

Hec. With wings upon my back, or by what means?

Polym. Thou wilt become a dog with bloodshot eyes.

Hec. How knowest thou of my transformation?

Polym. Dionysus, our Thracian prophet, told me so.

Hec. And did he tell thee nothing of thy present trouble?

Polym. No; else had thou never caught me thus by guile.

Hec. Shall I die or live, and so complete my life on earth?

Polym. Die shalt thou; and to thy tomb shall be given a name—

Hec. Recalling my form, or what wilt thou tell me?

Polym. The hapless hound's grave,[1] a mark for mariners.

Hec. 'Tis naught to me, now that thou hast paid me forfeit.

Polym. Further, thy daughter Cassandra must die.

[1] Cynossema, a promontory in the Thracian Chersonese.

did slay he hath paid me his forfeit look where he cometh from the tent I will withdraw out of his path and stand aloof from the hot fury of this Thracian my deadly foe

Enter POLYMESTOR

Polym Woe is me! whither can I go where halt or whither turn? shall I crawl upon my hands like a wild four footed beast on their track? Which path shall I take first this or that eager as I am to clutch those Trojan murderesses that have destroyed me? Out upon ye cursed daughters of Phrygia! to what corner have ye fled cowering before me? O sun god *would thou couldst heal my bleeding orbs ridding* me of my blindness!

Ha! hush! I catch their stealthy footsteps here Where can I dart on them and gorge me on their flesh *and bones making for myself a wild beast s* meal exacting vengeance in requital of their outrage on me? Ah woe is me! whither am I rushing leaving my babes unguarded for hell hounds to mangle to be murdered and ruthlessly cast forth upon the hills a feast of blood for dogs? Where shall I stay or turn my steps? where rest? like a ship that lies anchored at sea so gathering close my linen robe I rush to that chamber of death to guard my babes

Ch Woe is thee! what grievous outrage hath been wreaked on thee! a fearful penalty for thy foul deed hath the deity imposed whoe er he is whose hand *is heavy upon thee*

Polym Woe is me! Ho! my Thracian spearmen clad in mail a race of knights whom Ares doth inspire! Ho! Achæans! sons of Atreus ho! to you I loudly call come hither in God s name come! Doth any hearken or will no man help me? Why do ye delay? Women captive women have destroyed me A fearful fate s mine ah me! my hideous outrage! Whither can I turn or go? Shall I take wings and soar aloft to the mansions of the sky where Orion and Sirius dart from their eyes a flash as of fire or shall I in my misery plunge to Hades murky flood?

Ch Tis a venial sin when a man suffering from evils too heavy to bear rids himself of a wretched existence

Enter AGAMEMNON

Ag Hearing a cry I am come hither for Echo child of the mountain rock hath sent her voice loud ringing through the host causing a tumult Had I not known that Troy s towers were levelled by the might of Hellas this uproar had caused no slight panic

Polym Best of friends for by thy voice I know thee Agamemnon dost see my piteous state?

Ag What! hapless Polymestor who hath stricken thee? who hath reft thine eyes of sight staining the pupils with blood? who hath slain these children? whoe er he was fierce must have been his wrath against thee and thy children

Polym Hecuba helped by the captive women hath destroyed me no! not destroyed far worse than that

Ag (*Addressing* HECUBA) What hast thou to say? Was it thou that didst this deed as he avers? thou, Hecuba that hast ventured on this inconceivable daring?

Polym Ha! what is that? is she somewhere near? show me tell me where that I may grip her in my hands and rend her limb from limb bespattering her with gore

Ag Ho! madman what wouldst thou?

Polym By heaven I entreat thee let me vent on her the fury of my arm

Ag Hold! banish that savage spirit from thy heart and plead thy cause that after hearing thee and her in turn I may fairly decide what reason there is for thy present sufferings

Polym I will tell my tale There was a son of Priam Polydore the youngest a child by Hecuba *whom his father Priam sent to me from Troy to* bring up in my halls suspecting no doubt the fall of Troy Him I slew but hear my reason for so doing to show how cleverly and wisely I had thought it out My fear was that if that child were left to be thy enemy he would re people Troy and settle it afresh and the Achæans knowing that a son of Priam survived might bring another expedition against the Phrygian land and harry and lay waste these plains of Thrace hereafter for the neighbours of Troy to experience the very troubles we were lately suffering O king Now Hecuba having discovered the death of her son brought me hither *on the following pretext saying she would tell me* of hidden treasure stored up in Ilium by the race of Priam and she led me apart with my children into the tent that none but I might hear her news So I sat me down on a couch in their midst to rest for there were many of the Trojan maidens seated there some on my right hand some on my left as it had been beside a friend and they were praising the weaving of our Thracian handiwork looking at this robe as they held it up to the light meantime others examined my Thracian spear and so stripped me of the protection of both And those that were young mothers were dandling my children in their arms, with loud admiration as they passed them on from hand to hand to remove them far from their father and then after their smooth speeches (wouldst thou believe it) in an instant snatching daggers from some secret place in their dress they stab my children whilst others like foes seized me hand and foot and if I tried to raise my head anxious to help my babes they would clutch me by the hair while if I stirred my hands I could do nothing poor wretch! for the numbers of the women At last they wrought a fearful deed worse than what had gone before for they took their brooches and stabbed the pupils of my hapless eyes making them gush with blood and then fled through the chambers up *I sprang like a wild beast in pursuit of the shameless* murderesses searching along each wall with hunter s care dealing buffets spreading ruin This then is what I have suffered because of my zeal for thee O Agamemnon for slaying an enemy of thine But to spare thee a lengthy speech if any of the men of

HERACLES MAD

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AMPHITRYON MADNESS
MEGARA MESSENGER
LYCUS HERACLES
IRIS THESEUS
CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES

At the entrance of Heracles' house in Thebes before the altar of Zeus. Enter AMPHITRYON, MEGARA, *and her three sons.*

Amphitryon What mortal hath not heard of him who shared a wife with Zeus, Amphitryon of Argos, whom erst Alcaeus, son of Perseus, begat, Amphitryon the father of Heracles? He it was dwelt here in Thebes, where from the sowing of the dragon's teeth grew up a crop of earth born giants; for of these Ares saved a scanty band, and their children's children people the city of Cadmus. Hence sprang Creon, son of Menoeceus, king of this land; and Creon became the father of this lady, Megara, whom once all Cadmus' race escorted with the glad music of lutes at her wedding in the day that Heracles, illustrious chief, led her to my halls. Now he, my son, left Thebes where I was settled, left his wife Megara and her kin, eager to make his home in Argolis, in that walled town[1] which the Cyclopes built, whence I am exiled for the slaying of Electryon; so he, wishing to lighten my affliction and to find a home in his own land, did offer Eurystheus a mighty price for my recall, even to free the world of savage monsters, whether it was that Hera goaded him to submit to this or that fate was leagued against him. Divers are the toils he hath accomplished, and last of all hath he passed through the mouth of Taenarus into the halls of Hades to drag to the light that hound with bodies three, and thence is he never returned. Now there is an ancient legend amongst the race of Cadmus, that one Lycus in days gone by was husband to Dirce, being king of this city with its seven towers, before that Amphion and Zethus, sons of Zeus, lords of the milk-white steeds, became rulers in the land. His son, called by the same name as his father, albeit no Theban but a stranger from Euboea, slew Creon, and after that seized the government, having fallen on this city when weakened by dissension. So this connection with Creon is likely to prove to us a serious evil; for now that my son is in the bowels of the earth, this illustrious monarch Lycus is bent on extirpating the children of Heracles, to quench one blood feud with another, likewise his wife and me, if useless age like mine is to rank amongst men, that the boys may never grow up to exact a blood penalty of their uncle's family. So I, left here by my son, whilst he is gone into the pitchy darkness of the earth, to tend and guard his children in his house, am taking my place with their mother, that the race of Heracles may not perish, here at the altar of Zeus the Saviour, which my own gallant child set up to commemorate his glorious victory over the Minyae. And here we are careful to keep our station, though in need of everything, of food, of drink, and raiment, huddled together on the hard bare ground; for we are barred out from our house and sit here for want of any other safety. As for friends, some I see are insincere, while others, who are staunch, have no power to help us further. This is what misfortune means to man. God grant it may never fall to the lot of any who bears the least goodwill to me, to apply this never-failing test of friendship!

Megara Old warrior, who erst didst raze the citadel of the Taphians leading on the troops of Thebes to glory, how uncertain are God's dealings with man! I for instance, as far as concerned my sire[2] was never an outcast of fortune, for he was once accounted a man of mighty by reason of his wealth, possessed as he was of royal power, for which long spears are launched at the lives of the fortunate through love of it; children too he had; and me did he betroth to thy son, matching me in glorious marriage with Heracles. Whereas now all that is dead and gone from us; and I and thou, old friend, art doomed to die, and these children of Heracles, whom I am guarding 'neath my wings as a bird keepeth her tender chicks under her. And they the while in turn keep asking me, "Mother, whither is our father gone from the land? what is he about? when will he return?" Thus they inquire for their father in childish perplexity; while I put them off with excuses, inventing stories; but still I wonder if 'tis he whenever a door creaks on its hinges, and up they all start thinking to embrace their father's knees. What hope or way of salvation art thou now devising, old friend? for to thee I look. We can never steal beyond the boundaries of the land unseen, for there is too strict a watch set on us at every outlet, nor have

[1] Mycenae.

[2] Creon.

He I scorn the prophecy! I give it to thee to keep for thyself

Polym Her shall the wife of Agamemnon grim keeper of his palace slay

He Never may the daughter of Tyndareus do such a frantic deed!

Polym And she shall slay this king as well lifting high the axe

Ag Ha! sirrah art thou mad? art so eager to find sorrow?

Polym Kill me for in Argos there awaits thee a murderous bath

Ag Ho! servants hale him from my sight!

Polym Ha! my words gall thee

Ag Stop his mouth!

Polym Close it now for I have spoken

Ag Haste and cast him upon some desert island since his mouth is full of such exceeding presumption Go thou unhappy Hecuba and bury thy two corpses and you Trojan women to your masters tents repair for lo! I perceive a breeze just rising to waft us home God grant we reach our country and find all well at home released from troubles here!

Ch Away to the harbour and the tents my friends, to prove the toils of slavery! for such is fate's relentless hest

Exeunt omnes

terror of a bra e man s descendants. Still it is hard on us, if for thy coward ce we must d e a fate that ou ht to ha e overtaken thee at our bra er hands, f Zeus had been fairly di posed toward us. But f thou art so anxious t mak thyself supreme i the land let us t least go into exil btain from all olenc else thou wilt suffe b it whe so the d ity causes fortune s breeze to eer round

Ah! thou land of Cadmus—for to thee too will I turn upbraiding thee with words f reproach—is this our succou of Hera les and his children? the ma ho faced alone the M nyan host n battle and allowed Th bes t see th li ht w th freemen s eyes. I ca not praise Hellas, no will I e er keep silence, findi her so cra en s r wards m son she should ha come with fire nd sword and warrior s rms to help these tender babes, t requit him for ll his labours purgi land and sea Such help my child en, either Hellas nor the *city of Th bes af* ford ou t me feeble friend y look, that am but empty sound and nothi mo F r the gour hich once I had is gone from me my limbs are palsied with a and my stren th is deca ed Were I but ou nd till a ma of my hands, I would ha seized my pea nd dabbled those flaxen locks of his with b ood so that the coward would now be fl in f om my prowess beyond th bounds f Atlas.

Ch Ha e not the bra e amongst mankind a fair pening for speech albeit low t begin?

Ly Sa hat thou wilt of me *in thy exalted* phrase, but I by deed will mak thee rue those words. (*Calling to h servant*) Ho! bid wood-cutt rs go, som to Heli on others t th glens of Parnassus, and cut me logs of oak, and when they re brou ht to the town, pile p sta k of wood all round th altar on either sid thereof, and set fire to t nd burn th m all ali e, that they may learn that the dead o longer rules this land but that for th present I am king (*Angrily t th* CHORUS) As for you, old men, since thwart m ews, ot for th children of Hera les alon hall lament but likewise for ev ry blow that trikes his house and hall n et forget s re sla es nd I our prince

Ch Y son f Earth, whom Ares n das did sow when from the dragon s ra ening jaw he had torn th teeth, p with our sta es, whereon e lean your hands, and da h out this miscreant brains! a f llow who, w thout even bei Th ban, but foreigner lords t hamefull o er th youn r folk but *my* master shalt thou never be t th joy nor shalt thou reap the harvest of all m toil Begone with my curse pon thee! carry thy insol nce ba k t th place whence t cam For never whilst I li halt thou la these son of H racles n t so deep beneath th earth hath their fath disappeared from his hild en ken. Thou art possession of this land whi h thou hast rui ed whi h ts benefactor ha m sed his just eward and y t do I take *too* much upon myself because I help those I l e after their death, when most they eed friend? Ah! right hand, how fain wouldst thou wield th pear but thy weakness is death blow to thy fond de

s re for then had I stopped thee call ng me sla e and I would ha e go erned Thebes, wherein thou art now *exulting* with credit for a c ty s ck with dissension and e il counsels thinketh not aright therwise it would never ha e accepted thee as its ma ter

Meg Old sirs, I thank you tis right that friends should feel virtuous ind gnat on on behalf of those they love but do not on our account ent your anger on the tyrant to your own undoing Hear my ad ce Amphitryon if haply there appear to thee to be aught in what I say Ho e my ch dren stra ge f I d d not lo e those whom I laboured to bring fo th! Death I count a *dreadful fate but the man* who wrestles with necessity I esteem a *fool*. Since we must d e let us do so without being burnt al e t furnish our foes w th food for merriment which to my mind is an evil worse tha death for many a fair guerdo do we owe our family Th e has ever been a warr r s fai fame so ti not to be endured that th u shouldst d e a coward s death and my husband s reputatio *needs no one to witness that* he would ne er consent to save these children s li es b lett n them incur the stain of cowardice for the noble are affl cted by disgrace on account of thei hildren nor must I shrink from following my lord s example As to thy hopes consider how I wei h them. Thou thinkest thy son will return from be eath the earth who e er has come back from the dead *out of the halls f Hades*? Thou hast a *hope* perhaps of soften ng this man by entreaty no, no! better to fl from on s enemy when he is so brut h but yield to men of breed n and culture f thou wilt mo e easil obtain me cy there by friend l ertures. True, thought has already occurred to me that we mi ht by entreaty obt n a sentence of exil for the hildren y t thi too s misery to ompass their d li erance with d penury as the esult for tis saving that hosts look sweetly on banished friends for a da and no more. Steel thy *heart to d e with us, f r that awaits thee after all* By th bra e soul I challenge thee, old friend for whoso stru les hard to escape destiny shows zeal no doubt b t ti zeal w th taint of folly for what must be no on will ever a ail to alter

Ch If ma had insulted thee, while yet my arms were lusty there would ha been an easy way to stop him but now am I a thing of naught and so thou henceforth, Amphitryon, must scheme how t ert misfortune.

Am 'Tis not cowardice or any longin for life that hinders my dying *but* my wish t sa e my son hildren thou h no doubt I m ainly w hing for mpossibilities. Lo! here is my neck read for *thy sword* t *pierce* m body for thee t hack or hurl from the rock onl one boon I cra e for both of us, O king slay m and this hapless mother be for thou slay the child en, that we may n t see the hideous si ht, as they gasp out their lives, calling on their mother nd their father s sire for the rest work thy will, if so thou rt inclined for we have no defence gainst death.

we any longer hopes of safety in our friends What ever thy scheme is declare it lest our death be made ready while we are only prolonging the time powerless to escape

Am 'Tis by no means easy my daughter to give one s earnest advice on such matters offhand with out weary thought

Meg Dost need a further taste of grief or cling so fast to life?

Am Yes I love this life and cling to its hopes

Meg So do I but it boots not to expect the unexpected old friend

Am In these delays is left the only cure for our evils

Meg Tis the pain of that interval I feel so

Am Daughter there may yet be a happy escape from present troubles for me and thee my son thy husband may yet arrive So calm thyself and wipe those tears from thy children s eyes and sooth them with soft words inventing a tale to delude them piteous though such fraud be Yea for men s mis fortunes ofttimes flag and the stormy wind doth not always blow so strong nor are the prosperous ever so for all things change making way for each other The bravest man is he who relieth ever on his hopes but despair is the mark of a coward

Enter CHORUS OF OLD MEN OF THEBES

Chorus To the sheltering roof to the old man s couch leaning on my staff have I set forth chanting a plaintive dirge like some bird grown grey I that am but a voice and nothing more a fancy bred of the visions of sleep by night palsied with age yet meaning kindly All hail! ye orphaned babes! all hail old friend! thou too unhappy mother wailing for thy husband in the halls of Hades! Faint not too soon upon your way nor let your limbs grow weary even as a colt beneath the yoke grows weary as he mounts some stony hill dragging the weight of a wheeled car Take hold of hand or robe whoso feels his footsteps falter Old friend escort another like thyself who erst amid his toiling peers in the days of our youth would take his place beside thee no blot upon his country s glorious record

See how like their father s sternly flash these children s eyes! Misfortune God wot hath not failed his children nor yet hath his comeliness been denied them O Hellas! if thou lose these of what allies wilt thou rob thyself!

But hist! I see Lycus the ruler of this land drawing near the house

Enter Lycus

Lycus One question if I may to this father of Heracles and his wife and certainly as your lord and master I have a right to put what questions I choose How long do ye seek to prolong your lives? What hope what succour do ye see to save you from death? Do you trust that these children s father who lies dead in the halls of Hades will return? How unworthily ye show your sorrow at having to die thou (*to* AMPHITRYON) after thy idle boasts scattered broadcast through Hellas that Zeus was partner in thy marriage bed and there begat a new god and thou (*to* MEGARA) after calling thyself the wife of so peerless a lord

After all what was the fine exploit thy husband achieved if he *did* kill a water snake in a marsh or that monster of Nemea? which he caught in a snare for all he says he strangled it to death in his arms. Are these your weapons for the hard struggle? Is it for this then that Heracles children should be spared? a man who has won a reputation for valour in his contests with beasts in all else a weakling who ne er buckled shield to arm nor faced the spear but with a bow that coward s weapon was ever ready to run away Archery is no test of manly bravery no! he *is* a man who keeps his post in the ranks and steadily faces the swift wound the spear may plough My policy again old man shows no reckless cruelty but caution for I am well aware I slew Creon the father of Megara and am in possession of his throne So I have no wish that these children should grow up and be left to take vengeance on me in requital for what I have done

Am As for Zeus let Zeus defend his son s case but as for me Heracles I am only anxious on thy behalf to prove by what I say this tyrant s ignorance for I cannot allow thee to be ill spoken of First then for that which should never have been said—for to speak of thee Heracles as a coward is, methinks outside the pale of speech—of that must I clear thee with heaven to witness I appeal then to the thunder of Zeus and the chariot wherein he rode when he pierced the giants, earth s brood to the heart with his winged shafts and with gods uplifted the glorious triumph song or go to Pholoe and ask the insolent tribe of four legged Centaurs, thou craven king ask them who they would judge their bravest foe will they not say my son who according to thee is but a pretender? Wert thou to ask Euboean Dirphys thy native place it would nowise sing thy praise for thou hast never done a single gallant deed to which thy country can witness Next thou dost disparage that clever invention an archer s weapon come listen to me and learn wisdom A man who fights in line is a slave to his weapons and if his fellow comrades want for courage he is slain himself through the cowardice of his neighbours or if he break his spear he has not wherewithal to defend his body from death having only one means of defence whereas all who are armed with the trusty bow though they have but one weapon yet is it the best for a man after discharging countless arrows still has others where to defend himself from death and standing at a distance keeps off the enemy wounding them for all their watchfulness with shafts invisible and never exposing himself to the foe but keeping under cover and this is far the wisest course in battle to harm the enemy if they are not stationed out of shot and keep safe oneself These arguments completely contradict thine with regard to the matter at issue Next why art thou desirous of slaying these children? What have they done to thee? One piece of wisdom

wasted. Thus with three principalit es would your father exalt yo his three sons, proud of yo r manl ness while I was choosing the best b ides for you, schemin to link you by ma riage to Athens Thebes, and Sparta that ye might h e a happy l fe with a fast sheet anchor to hold by And now that is all am hed fortune s breeze hath eered and gi en t you fo brides the maidens f death in their stead, and tears to me to bath them n woe is me for my foolish thoughts! and your grandsire here is cele bratin your marria feast accept n Hades as the father of your brides, a gr m relati n hip to make Ah me! b ch of you shall I first press to my bosom h h last? on which be t w my k ss or clasp close to me? Oh! v uld that like the bee with russet in I co ld colle t from ry source my s ghs in one and blending them togeth r hed th m n one copious flood! H racles, dear hu band rune to thee I call, if haply mo tal voice can m ke tself heard t Hades hall thy fath r and h ldr n are dy ng and I am doomed I who once bee use of thee was counted blest as men cou t bliss Com t o r rescue appea I pray if b t s a phantom s nce thy mere com g ould be enough for they a cowa ds com pa ed th thee who re lay thy ch ld n.

Am Lad do thou p epare the fu eral rites but I, O Zeus, t ct h o t m hand to heave call on thee to he p these ch ldren if such be thy inten tion for soon will an aid of thine be una ailing and y t thou ha t been oft n oked my toil s wa ted death seems inevitabl Y ed f ends, the y rs of life ar few so take heed that ye pass through t as gladly as y may w tho t a tho ght of sorrow from morn till night for tim reeks l ttle of p eser n our hopes and wh n he ha b sied himself n h s own business, away he fl es. Look t me a ma who had mad ma k amon t h s fellow by deeds f note et hath fortune in a s le day r bbed m of t f a feather that float way toward the sky I know not any whose plenteo s wealth and h h rep utation is fixed and sure fa ye well for ow ha e ye seen th la t f your old fr end my comrades.

Meg Ha! ld fr nd it my own my dea est I behold? o what am I t say?

Am I know not m d ughter I too am struck d mb

Meg I this h who, they t ld us, was beneath the earth?

Am 'Tis he unless some day-d eam mock our ght

Meg What am I say ng? What is ons do these anxio eyes beh ld? Old man th s no ther than thy ow son Com hither my hild n cling to your f th r s r be make ha te to com never loose you hold for he c t o e to help you nowise behind ou sa iour Zeus.

Enter H R CLES

Heracles All hail! my house nd portals of my home, how glad am I t eme ge to the light and see thee Ha! what is this? I see my h ld en before the house in the ga b of death, with chaplet on their heads, and my wife amid a th ong of men, and my father weeping o er some mischance Let me draw near to them and inqu e lady what strange stroke of fate hath f llen on the house?

Meg Dearest of all mankind to me! O ray of light appear ng t thy sire! art thou safe and is thy com g just in time to help thy dear ones?

He What meanest thou? what is th s confu n I find on my arrival father?

Meg We are bein ruined forgi e me old fr end if I have anticipated that hich thou had t a ri ht to tell him for woman s nature is perhaps more pr ne than man s to grief and they are my children that were being led to death which was my own lot too

He Great Apollo! what a prelude to thy story!

Meg Dead are my breth en dead my hoary sire

He How so? what befell him? who dealt the fatal blow?

Meg Lycus, our splend d monarch slew him

He Did he meet him i fair fi ht or was the land sick and weak?

Meg Aye from fact n now is he master of the city of Cadmus with its se en gates.

H Why hath panic f llen on thee and my a ed sire?

Meg He meant to k ll thy father me and my children

He Why what had he to fear from my orphan babes?

Meg He was afraid they mi ht some day avenge Creon s death

He What means this dress they wear suited to th dead?

Meg 'Tis the garb of death we ha e already put on

He And were ye being haled to death? O woe is m !

Meg Yes, deserted by e ry fr end and informed that thou wert dead

He What put such desperate thoughts into your heads?

Meg That was what the heralds of Eurystheus kept proclaiming

He Why did ye lea e my hearth and h me?

Meg H f rced us thy father was dra ged from his bed

He H d he no mercy to ill use the old man so?

Meg Mercy forsooth! that goddess and he dwell far enough apart

He Was I so poor n fri nds in my absence?

Meg Who are the friend of man n mi fortune?

H Do th y mak so light of my hard warring with the Mi yae?

Meg Misfortu e to repeat it to thee has no friends.

H Cast from your heads these chaplets of death, look up to the light f r nstead of the nether gloom your eyes beh ld the wel ome sun I meantime, sinc h r is work fo my hand will first go raze this upstart tyrant s h ll s, a d whe I ha e beheaded the misc eant, I will throw him to dogs to tear and every Theban who I find has played th traitor after my kindness, will I destr y with this victorious

Meg I too implore thee add a second boon that by thy single act thou mayst put us both under a double obligation suffer me to deck my children in robes of death—first opening the palace gates for now are we shut out—that this at least they may obtain from their father s halls

Ly I grant it and bid my servants undo the bolts Go in and deck yourselves robes I grudge not But soon as ye have clothed yourselves I will return to you to consign you to the nether world

Exit LYCUS

Meg Children follow the footsteps of your hapless mother to your father s halls where others possess his substance though his name is still ours

Exit MEGARA *with her children*

Am O Zeus in vain it seems did I get thee to share my bride with me in vain used we to call thee father of my son After all thou art less our friend than thou didst pretend Great god as thou art I a mere mortal surpass thee in true worth For I did not betray the children of Heracles but thou by stealth didst find thy way to my couch taking another s wife without leave given while to save thy own friends thou hast no skill Either thou art a god of little sense or else naturally unjust

Exit AMPHITRYON

Ch Phœbus is singing a plaintive dirge to drown his happier strains striking with key of gold his sweet tongued lyre so too am I fain to sing a song of praise a crown to all his toil concerning him who is gone to the gloom beneath the nether world whether I am to call him son of Zeus or of Amphitryon For the praise of noble toils accomplished is a glory to the dead First he cleared the grove of Zeus of a lion and put its skin upon his back hiding his auburn hair in its fearful gaping jaws then on a day with murderous bow he wounded the race of wild Centaurs that range the hills slaying them with winged shafts Peneus the river of fair eddies knows him well and those far fields unharvested and the steadings on Pelion and they[1] who haunt the glens of Homole bordering thereupon whence they rode forth to conquer Thessaly arming themselves with pines for clubs likewise he slew that dappled hind with horns of gold that preyed upon the country folk glorifying Artemis huntress queen of Œnoe next he mounted on a car and tamed with the bit the steeds of Diomede that greedily champed their bloody food at gory mangers with jaws unbridled devouring with hideous joy the flesh of men then crossing Hebrus silver stream he still toiled on to perform the hests of the tyrant of Mycenæ till he came to the strand of Malian gulf by the streams of Anaurus where he slew with his arrows Cycnus murderer of his guests unsocial wretch who dwelt in Amphanæ also he came to those minstrel maids to their orchard in the west to pluck from the leafy apple tree its golden fruit when he had slain th tawny dragon whose awful coils were twined all round to guard it and he made his way into ocean lairs bringing calm to men that use the oar [2] moreover he sought the home of Atlas, and stretched out his hands to uphold the firmament and on his manly shoulders took the starry mansions of the gods then he went through the waves of heaving Euxine against the mounted host of Amazons dwelling round Mæotis, the lake that is fed by many a stream having gathered to his standard all his friends from Hellas to fetch the gold-embroidered raiment of the warrior queen a deadly quest for a girdle And Hellas won those glorious spoils of the barbarian maid and safe in Mycenæ are they now On Lerna s murderous hound the many headed water snake he set his branding iron and smeared its venom on his darts wherewith he slew the shepherd of Erytheia[3] a monster with three bodies and many another glorious achievement he brought to a happy issue to Hades house of tears hath he now sailed the goal of his labours, where he is ending his career of toil nor cometh he thence again Now is thy house left without a friend and Charon s boat awaits thy children to bear them on that journey out of life whence is no returnin contrary to God s law and man s justice and it is to thy prowess that thy house is looking although thou art not here Had I been strong and lusty able to brandish the spear in battle s onset my Theban compeers too I would have stood by thy children to champion them but now my happy youth is gone and I am left

But lo! I see the children of Heracles who was erst so great clad in the vesture of the grave and his loving wife dragging her babes along at her side and that hero s aged sire Ah! woe is me! no longer can I stem the flood of tears that spring to my old eyes

Enter AMPHITRYON MEGARA *and children*

Meg Come now who is to sacrifice or butcher these poor children? or rob me of my wretched life! Behold! the victims are ready to be led to Hades halls O my children! an ill matched company are we hurried off to die old men and babes and mothers, all together Alas! for my sad fate and my children s, whom these eyes now for the last time behold So I gave you birth and reared you only for our foes to mock to flout and slay Ah me! how bitterly my hopes have disappointed me in the expectation I once formed from the words of your father (*Addressing each of her three sons in turn*) To *thee* thy dead sire was for giving Argos and thou wert to dwell in the halls of Eurystheus lording it o er the fair fruitful land of Argolis and o er thy head would he throw that lion s skin wherewith himself was girt *Thou* wert to be king of Thebes famed for its chariots receiving as thy heritage my broad lands, for so thou didst coax thy father dear and to thy hand used he to resign the carved club his sure defence pretending to give it thee To *thee* he promised to give Œchalia which once his archery had

[1]The Centaurs.

[2] he cleared the sea of pirates.

[3]Geryon

at the palace-doors, a song of my old age such as swans die singing, for there is a goodly theme for minstrels: he is the son of Zeus; yet his high-born worth towers his deeds of prowess, for his toil secured this life of calm for man, having destroyed all fearsome beasts.

Enter LYCUS *and* AMPHITRYON

Ly. Ha! Amphitryon, 'tis high time thou camest forth from the palace; ye have been too long arraying yourselves in the robes and trappings of the dead. Come, bid the wife and children of Heracles show themselves outside the house, to die on the conditions you yourselves offered.

Am. O king, thou dost persecute me in my misery and heapest insult upon me over and above the loss of my son; thou shouldst have been more moderate in thy zeal, though thou art my lord and master. But since thou dost impose death's stern necessity on me, needs must I acquiesce and do thy will.

Ly. Pray, where is Megara? where are the children of Alcmena's son?

Am. She, I believe, so far as I can guess from outside—

Ly. What ground hast thou to base thy fancy on?

Am. Is sitting as a suppliant on the altar's hallowed steps.

Ly. Imploring them quite uselessly to save her life.

Am. And calling on her dead husband, quite in vain.

Ly. He is nowhere near, and he certainly will never come.

Am. No, unless perhaps a god should raise him from the dead.

Ly. Go to her and bring her from the palace.

Am. By doing so I should become an accomplice in her murder.

Ly. Since thou hast this scruple, I, who have left fear behind, will myself bring out the mother and her children. Follow me, servants, that we may put an end to this delay of our work to our joy.

Exit LYCUS.

Am. Then go thy way along the path of fate; for what remains, maybe another will provide. Expect for thy evil deeds to find some evil thyself. Ah! my aged friends, he is marching fairly to his doom; soon will he be entangled in the snare of the sword, thinking to slay his neighbours, the villain! I will hence, to see him fall dead; for the sight of a foe being slain and paying the penalty of his misdeeds affords pleasurable feelings. *Exit* AMPHITRYON

Ch. (1) Evil has changed sides; he who was erst a mighty king is now turning his life backward into the road to Hades.

(2) Hail to thee! Justice, and heaven's retribution.

(3) At last hast thou reached the goal where thy death will pay the forfeit

(4) For thy insults against thy betters.

(5) Joy makes my tears burst forth.

(6) There is come retribution, which the prince of the land never once thought in his heart would happen.

(7) Come, old friends, let us look within to see if one we know has met the fate I hope.

Ly. (*Within*) Ah me! ah me!

Ch. (8) Ha! how sweet to hear that opening note of his within the house; death is not far off him now.

(9) Hark! the prince cries out in his agony; that preludes death.

Ly. (*Within*) O kingdom of Cadmus, by treachery I am perishing!

Ch. (10) Thou wert thyself for making others perish; endure thy retribution; 'tis only the penalty of thy own deeds thou art paying.

(11) Who was he, weak son of man, that aimed his silly saw at the blessed gods of heaven with impious blasphemy, maintaining that they are weaklings after all?

(12) Old friends, our godless foe is now no more.

(13) The house is still; let us to our dances.

(14) Yea, for fortune smiles upon my friends as I desire.

Dances and banquets now prevail throughout the holy town of Thebes. For release from tears and respite from sorrow give birth to song. The upstart king is dead and gone; our former monarch now is prince, having made his way even from the bourn of Acheron. Hope beyond all expectation is fulfilled. To heed the right and wrong is heaven's care. 'Tis their gold and their good luck that lead men's hearts astray, bringing in their train unholy tyranny. For no man ever had the courage to reflect what reverses time might bring; but disregarding law to gratify lawlessness, he shatters in gloom the car of happiness. Deck thee with garlands, O Ismenus! break forth into dancing, ye paved streets of our seven-gated city! come Dirce, fount of waters fair; and joined with her ye daughters of Asopus, come from your father's waves to add your maiden voices to our hymn, the victor's prize that Heracles hath won. O Pythian rock, with forests crowned, and haunts of the Muses on Helicon! make my city and her walls re-echo with cries of joy, where sprang the earth-born crop to view, a warrior host with shields of brass, who are handing on their realm to children's children, a light divine to Thebes. All hail the marriage bed whereon two bridegrooms shared the one a mortal, the other Zeus, who came to wed the maiden sprung from Perseus; for that marriage of thine, O Zeus, in days gone by has been proved to me a true story beyond all expectation; and time hath shown the lustre of Heracles' prowess, who emerged from caverns 'neath the earth after leaving Pluto's halls below. To me art thou a worthier lord than that base-born king, who now lets it be plainly seen in this struggle 'twixt armed warriors, whether justice still finds favour in heaven.

(*The forms of* MADNESS *and* IRIS *appear above the palace*) Ha! see there, my old comrades! the same wild panic fallen on us all, what phantom is this I see hovering o'er the house? Fly, fly, bestir thy

club the rest will I scatter with my feathered shafts and fill Ismenus full of bloody corpses and Dirce s clear fount shall run red with gore. For whom ought I to help rather than wife and children and aged sire? Farewell my labours! for it was in vain I accomplished them rather than succoured these And yet I ought to die in their defence since they for their sire were doomed else what shall we find so noble in having fought a hydra and a lion at the hests of Eurystheus if I make no effort to save my own children from death? No longer I trow as heretofore shall I be called Heracles the victor

Ch Tis only right that parents should help their children their aged sires and the partners of their marriage

Am My son tis like thee to show thy love for thy dear ones and thy hate for all that is hostile only curb excessive hastiness

He Wherein father am I now showing more than fitting haste?

Am The king hath a host of allies needy villains though *pretending to be rich* who sowed dissension and o erthrew the state with a view to plundering their neighbours for the wealth they had in their houses was all spent dissipated by their sloth Thou was seen entering the city and that being so beware that thou bring not thy enemies together and be slain unawares

He Little I reck if the whole city saw me but happening to see a bird perched in an unlucky position from it I learnt that some trouble had be fallen my house so I purposely made my entry to the land by stealth

Am For thy lucky coming hither go salute thy household altar and let thy father s halls behold thy face For soon will the king be here in person to drag away thy wife and children and murder them and to add me to the bloody list But if thou remain on the spot all will go well and thou wilt profit by this security but do not rouse thy city ere thou *hast these matters well in train* my son

He I will do so thy advice is good I will enter my house After my return at length from the sunless den of Hades and the maiden queen of hell I will not neglect to greet first of all the gods beneath my roof

Am Why didst thou in very deed go to the house of Hades my son?

He Aye and brought to the light that three headed monster

Am Didst worst him in fight or receive him from the goddess?

He In fair fight for I had been lucky enough to witness *the rites of the initiated* [1]

Am Is the monster really lodged in the house of Eurystheus?

He The grove of Demeter and the city of Hermione are his prison

Am Does not Eurystheus know that thou hast returned to the upper world?

He He knows not I came hither first to learn your news

Am How is it thou wert so lon beneath the earth?

He I stayed awhile attempting to bring back Theseus from Hades father

Am Where is he? gone to his native land?

He He set out for Athens right glad to have escaped from the lower world Come children attend your father to the house My entering in is fairer in your eyes I trow than my going out Take heart and no more let the tears stream from your eyes *thou too dear wife collect thy courage cease from* fear leave go of my robe for I cannot fly away nor have I any wish to flee from those I love Ah! they do not loose their hold but cling to my garments all the more were ye in such jeopardy? Well, I must lead them taking them by the hand to draw them *after me like a ship when towing for I too* do not reject the care of my children here all mankind are equal all love their children both those of *high estate and those who are naught* tis wealth that makes distinctions among them some have others want but all the human race loves its offspring

Exeunt HERACLES AMPHITRYON *and* MEGARA *with their children*

Ch Dear to me is youth but old age is ever hanging o er my head a burden heavier than Ætna s crags casting its pall of gloom upon my eyes Oh! never may the wealth of Asia s kings tempt me to barter for houses stored with gold my happy youth which is in wealth and poverty alike most fair! But old age is gloomy and deathly I hate it let it sink beneath the waves! Would it had never *found its* way to the homes and towns of mortal men but were still drifting on for ever do n the wind! Had the gods shown discernment *and wisdom* as mortals count these things men would have gotten youth twice over a visible mark of worth amongst *whomsoever found and after death* would these have retraced their steps once more to the sun light while the mean man would have had but a sin le portion of life and thus would it have been possible to distinguish the good and the bad just as sailors know the number of the stars amid the clouds. But as it is the gods have set no certain boundary twixt good and bad but time s onward roll brings increase only to man s wealth

Never will I cease to link in one the Graces and the Muses fairest union Ne er may *my lines* be cast among untutored boors but ever may I find a place among the crownèd choir! Yes still the aged *bard lifts up his voice of bygone memories* still is my song of the triumphs of Heracles whether Bromius the giver of ine is nigh or the strains of the seven stringed lyre and the Libyan flute are rising not yet will I cease to sing the Muses praise my patrons in the dance As the maids of Delos raise their song of joy circling round the temple gates in honour of Leto s fair son the graceful *dancer* so I with my old lips will sing songs of victory

[1] i.e. the Eleusinian mysteries.

n h t hand to dip it in the hol water ! he stopped without a word. And as their father lingered his children looked at him and lo! he was chan ed his eyes ere rollin he was quite distraught his eye b lls were b ood-shot a d starting from their sockets, nd foam was oozin down his bearded cheek. Anon he spoke lat h the while a madman s laugh. "Father why should I sacrifice before I ha e slain Eurystheus, wh kindl th purif flame and ha e the toil twi e over when I might at one stroke so fail end it all? Soon as I ha e brou ht th head of Eurystheus hither I w ll cleanse m hands for those already slain. Spill the water cast the ba kets from our hands. Ho! gi e me now m bow and cl b! T famed Myc nae w ll I go crow bars and pick axes must I tak for I will hea e f om their ery base w th ro l ers those c t walls which t e Cyclopes squared w th red plumbl ne and ma son s tools

Then he set out and thou h he had no chariot there, he thou ht he had nd was for mounting to t seat, and us a good as thou h his fin ers e ll h alone A twofold feelin f led his servant brea ts, half musement and half fear nd o e looking to his ne bour said Is our ma t r maki g port for us, or is h mad?" But h the while was pacin to and fro in his house and rushin i to the men s chamber he thou ht he had reached the city of Nisus albeit h had gone n o his own halls. So h threw himself pon th floor a f h were the e and made eady r feast But fter wa ting a brief m e h began sa in he was on his way to the plains and the a s of th Isthmus and th n strip pi h mself f h s mantle h f ll to competing w th a imaginary n al, o r hom h proclaimed himself victor th his wn ore calli on maginary spec tators to listen. Next fa ca ry ng him t M cenae he was utt rin fearf l threats ga nst Eurys theus. Meantim his fath r caught him by his stal wa t arm, and thus addressed h m My son what meanest thou h r by? Wh t stra ge d nes are these Ca t be that the blood of th late ctims has d n thee fra t ?" But he suppos t wa th father f Eurystheus stri in in l e r supplica ion t tou h his hand thrust h m side nd then r t his own child e rned his bow and made ead his qui er tha kin to slay the sons of Eurys theus. And the in w ld affri ht darted hither and th her one t h hapless mother s skirts, anoth r t the shadow of pilla whil a third cowered eath th alta l ke bird Then ried thei moth O fa her what rt thou doing? dost mean to sla thy ch dre " Lik ise hi a ed sire and all the ga hered serv nt ed aloud But he hunt ng th hild ound nd ound the col mn n dreadful cles, nd com fac t fa w th h m shot h m to the hea t and h f ll pon h s ba k, spr klin th ton p llars w th blood h gasped t his life

Then d d Heracles hout for joy and boasted loud Here lies one of Eurystheus brood dead at my feet atoning for h s father s hate" Against a second d f he a m his bow who had crouched at the ltar s foot thinkin to escape unseen But ere he fi ed the poor child threw h mself at his father s knees, and fl nging his hand to reach h beard or neck cried Oh! slay m not dear father mine! I am thy chi d thi e own t s no son of Eurystheus thou w lt sla "

But that other with sa age Gorgon scow l as the ch ld now stood in ra e of his baleful archery smote him on the head s smites a sm th h s molten iron bringin down hi club upon th fair ha red boy nd crushed the bones. The second caught away he h es to add a th rd ictim to the other twa n But e e he could the poor mother ca ht up her babe and carried him within the house and shut the doors forthwith the madman as though he real were at the Cycl pean walls, prizes open the doors w th l rs, and hurl n d wn their posts, w th one f ll shaft laid low his wife and ch ld. Then n wild career h tarts to lay h s aged sire but lo! there came a phantom—so it seemed to us on look ers—of Pallas, with plumed helm, brandishing a spear and she hurled a rock against the breast of Heracles, wh h stayed him from his frenzied thirst for blood and pl n ed h m into sleep to the ground he f ll, sm ti g h s back aga nst a column that had fallen on th floor in twain wh n the roof f ll in. Thereon we rallied from our fli ht and w th the old man s aid bound him fa t w th knotted cord to th pillar that n h awake ng he might do no further mischief So the e he sleeps, poor wretch! a sleep that is n t blest ha in murdered w fe and children nay for my part I know not any son of man more miserable than he *Exit MESSENGER*

Ch That murde wrou ht by the daughters of Danaus, whereof my nat e Argos wots, was former l the most famous and n torious in Hellas but this hath surpassed and outdone those previous horrors. I could tell of the murder of that poor son of Zeus, whom Procn mother of an only child slew and offe ed to the Muses but thou hadst three children wretched parent and all of them hast thou in th fren y sl n What groans or wails what funeral dirge or cha t of death am I to raise? Alas and woe! see th bolted doors of the lofty palace are bein rolled apart Ah me! behold these children ly g dead before the r wret hed fath r who is sunk in ful slumber ft r shedding their blood Round him are bonds nd cords, ma e f st with many a knot bo t th bod of Heracles, and lashed to the ston col mn of his house Whil he the aged sire like mother bird wa l ng h r u fled ed b ood comes hast g hith r with halting st ps on his bitter jour n y

T e palace doors opening disclose HERACLES lying asleep bound t a shattered column

Am Softly sof ly! ye ged sons f Th bes, l t him sleep on and forget his sorrows.

Ch For thee old friend I weep and mourn for the children too and that ictorious chief

¹ L ghted brand from he alta was d pped in the holy wat and hose present were sprinkled w h t. Pal gara.

tardy steps! begone! away! O saviour prince avert calamity from me!

Iris Courage old men! she whom you see is Madness daughter of night and I am Iris the handmaid of the gods We have not come to do your city any hurt but against the house of one man only is our warfare even against him whom they call the son of Zeus and Alcmena For until he had finished all his grievous toils Destiny was preserving him nor would father Zeus ever suffer me or Hera to harm him But now that he hath accomplished the labours of Eurystheus Hera is minded to brand him with the guilt of shedding kindred blood by slaying his own children and I am one with her Come then maid unwed child of murky Night harden thy heart relentlessly send forth frenzy upon him confound his mind even to the slaying of his children drive him goad him wildly on his mad career shake out the sails of death that when he has sent o er Acheron s ferry that fair group of children by his own murderous hand he may learn to know how fiercely against him the wrath of Hera burns and may also experience mine otherwise if he escape punishment the gods will become as naught while man s power will grow

Madness Of noble parents was I born the daughter of Night sprung from the blood of Uranus and these prerogatives I hold not to use them in anger against friends nor have I any joy in visiting the homes of men and fain would I counsel Hera before I see her make a mistake and thee too if ye will hearken to my words This man against whose house thou art sending me has made himself a name alike in heaven and earth for after taming pathless wilds and raging sea he by his single might raised up again the honours of the gods when sinking before man s impiety wherefore I counsel thee do not wish him dire mishaps

Ir Spare us *thy* advice on Hera s and my schemes

Ma I seek to turn thy steps into the best path instead of into this bad one

Ir Twas not to practise self control that the wife of Zeus sent thee hither

Ma I call the sun god to witness that herein I am acting against my will but if indeed I must forthwith serve thee and Hera and follow you in full cry as hounds follow the huntsman why go I will nor shall ocean with its moaning waves nor the earthquake nor the thunderbolt with blast of agony be half so furious as the headlong rush I will make into the breast of Heracles through his roof will I burst my way and swoop upon his house after first slaying his children nor shall their murderer know that he is killing his own begotten babes till he is released from my madness Behold him! see how even now he is wildly tossing his head at the outset and rolling his eyes fiercely from side to side without a word nor can he control his panting breath but like a bull in act to charge he bellows fearfully calling on the goddesses of nether hell! Soon will I rouse thee to yet wilder dancing and sound a note of terror in thine ear Soar away O Iris to Olympus on thy honoured course while I unseen will steal into the halls of Heracles.

Exeunt IRIS *and* MADNESS

Ch Alas! alas! lament O city the son of Zeus, thy fairest bloom is being cut down

(1) Woe is thee Hellas! that wilt cast from thee thy benefactor and destroy him as he madly wildly dances where no pipe is heard

(2) She is mounted on her car the queen of sorrow and sighing and is goading on her steeds, as if for outrage the Gorgon child of night with hundred hissing serpent heads Madness of the flashing eyes

(3) Soon hath the god changed his good fortune soon will his children breathe their last slain by a father s hand

(4) Ah me! alas! soon will vengeance mad relentless lay low by a cruel death thy unhappy son O Zeus exacting a full penalty

(5) Alas O house! the fiend begins her dance of death without the cymbal s crash with no glad waving of the wine god s staff

(6) Woe to these halls! toward bloodshed she moves and not to pour libations of the juice of the grape

(7) O children haste to fly that is the chant of death her piping plays

(8) Ah yes! he is chasing the children Never ah! never will Madness lead her revel rout in vain

(9) Ah misery!

(10) Ah me! how I lament that aged sire that mother too that bore his babes in vain

(11) Look! look!

(12) A tempest rocks the house the roof is falling with it

(13) Oh! what art thou doing son of Zeus?

(14) Thou art sending hell s confusion against thy house as erst did Pallas on Enceladus

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger Ye hoary men of eld!

Ch Why oh! why this loud address to me?

Mes Awful is the sight within!

Ch No need for me to call another to announce that

Mes Dead lie the children

Ch Alas!

Mes Ah weep! for here is cause for weeping

Ch A cruel murder wrought by parents hands!

Mes No words can utter more than we have suffered

Ch What canst thou prove this piteous mischief was a father s outrage on his children? Tell me how these heavensent woes came rushing on the house say how the children met their sad mischance

Mes Victims to purify the house were stationed before the altar of Zeus for Heracles had slain a d cast from his halls the king of the land There stood his group of lovely children with his sire and Megara and already the basket was being passed round the altar and we were keeping holy silence But just as Alcmena s son was bringing the torch in his

H. Ah me! why do I spare my own life when I have taken that of my dear children? Shall I not hasten to leap from some sheer rock, or aim the sword against my heart and avenge my children's blood, or burn my body in the fire and so avert from my life the infamy which now awaits me?

But hither I see Theseus coming to check my deadly counsels, my kinsman and friend. Now shall I stand revealed, and the dearest of my friends will see the pollution I have incurred by my children's murder. Ah, woe is me! what am I to do? Where can I find release from my sorrows? shall I take wings or plunge beneath the earth? Come, let me veil my head in darkness; for I am ashamed of the evil I have done, and, since for these I have incurred fresh blood-guiltiness, I would fain not harm the innocent.

Enter THESEUS

Theseus. I am come, and others with me, young warriors from the land of Athens, encamped at present by the streams of Asopus, to help thy son, old friend. For a rumour reached the city of the Erechtidae, that Lycus had usurped the sceptre of this land and was become your enemy even to battle. Wherefore I came making recompense for the former kindness of Heracles in saving me from the world below, if haply ye have any need of such aid as I or my allies can give, old prince.

Ha! what means this heap of dead upon the floor? Surely I have not delayed too long and come too late to check a newer evil? Who slew these children? whose wife is this I see? Boys do not go to battle; nay, it must be some other strange mischance I here discover.

Am. O king, whose home is that olive-clad hill!

Th. Why this piteous prelude in addressing me?

Am. Heaven hath afflicted us with grievous sufferings.

Th. Whose be these children, o'er whom thou weepest?

Am. My own son's children, woe is him! their father and butcher both was he, hardening his heart to the bloody deed.

Th. Hush! good words only!

Am. I would I could obey!

Th. What dreadful words!

Am. Fortune has spread her wings, and we are ruined, ruined.

Th. What meanest thou? what hath he done?

Am. Slain them in a wild fit of frenzy with arrows dipped in the venom of the hundred-headed hydra.

Th. This is Hera's work; but who lies there among the dead, old man?

Am. My son, my own enduring son, that marched with gods to Phlegra's plain, there to battle with giants and slay them, warrior that he was.

Th. Ah, woe for him! whose fortune was e'er so curst as his?

Am. Never wilt thou find another that hath borne a larger share of suffering or been more fatally deceived.

Th. Why doth he veil his head, poor wretch, in his robe?

Am. He is ashamed to meet thine eye; his kinsman's kind intent and his children's blood make him abashed.

Th. But I come to sympathize; uncover him.

Am. My son, remove that mantle from thine eyes, throw it from thee, show thy face unto the sun; a counterpoise to weeping is battling for the mastery. In suppliant wise I entreat thee, as I grasp thy beard, thy knees, thy hands, and let fall the tear from my old eyes. O my child! restrain thy savage lion-like temper, for thou art rushing forth on an unholy course of bloodshed, eager to join mischief to mischief.

Th. What ho! To thee I call who art huddled there in thy misery; show to thy friends thy face; for no darkness is black enough to hide thy sad mischance. Why dost thou wave thy hand at me, signifying murder? is it that I may not be polluted by speaking with thee? If I share thy misfortune, what is that to me? For if I too had luck in days gone by, I must refer it to the time when thou didst bring me safe from the dead to the light of life. I hate a friend whose gratitude grows old; one who is ready to enjoy his friends' prosperity but unwilling to sail in the same ship with them when their fortune lours. Arise, uncover thy head, poor wretch! and look on me. The gallant soul endures without a word such blows as heaven deals.

He. O Theseus, didst thou witness this struggle with my children?

Th. I heard of it, and now I see the horrors thou meanest.

He. Why then hast thou unveiled my head to the sun?

Th. Why have I? Thou, a man, canst not pollute what is of God.

H. Fly, luckless wretch, from my unholy taint.

Th. The avenging fiend goes not forth from friend to friend.

H. For this I thank thee; I do not regret the service I did thee.

Th. While I, for kindness then received, now show my pity for thee.

H. Ah yes! I am a piteous object, a murderer of my own sons.

Th. I weep for thee in thy changed fortunes.

H. Didst ever find another more afflicted?

Th. Thy misfortunes reach from earth to heaven.

He. Therefore am I resolved on death.

Th. Dost thou suppose the gods attend to these thy threats?

H. Remorseless hath heaven been to me; so I will prove the like to it.

T. Hush! lest thy presumption add to thy sufferings.

H. My barque is freighted full with sorrow; there is no room to stow aught further.

Th. What wilt thou do? whither is thy fury drifting thee?

Am Stand further off make no noise nor outcry rouse him not from his calm deep slumber

Ch O horrible! all this blood—

Am Hush hush! ye will be my ruin

Ch That he has spilt is rising up against him

Am Gently raise your dirge of woe old friends lest he wake and bursting his bonds destroy the city rend his sire and dash his house to pieces

Ch I cannot possibly speak lower

Am Hush! let me note his breathing come let me put my ear close

Ch Is he sleeping?

Am Aye that is he a deathly sleep having slain wife and children with the arrows of his twanging bow

Ch Ah! mourn—

Am Indeed I do

Ch The children s death

Am Ah me!

Ch And thy own son s doom

Am Ah misery!

Ch Old friend—

Am Hush! hush! he is turning over he is waking! Oh! let me hide myself beneath the covert of yon roof

Ch Courage! darkness still broods o er thy son s eye

Am Oh! beware tis not that I shrink from leaving the light after my miseries poor wretch! but should he slay me that am his father then will he be devising mischief on mischief and to the avenging curse will add a parent s blood

Ch Well for thee hadst thou died in that day when to win thy wife thou didst go forth to exact vengeance for her slain brethren by sacking the Taphians sea beat town

Am Fly fly my aged friends haste from before the palace escape his waking fury! For soon will he heap up fresh carnage on the old ranging wildly once more through the streets of Thebes

Ch O Zeus why hast thou shown such savage hate against thine own son and plunged him in this sea of troubles?

He (*Waking*) Aha! my breath returns I am alive and my eyes resume their function opening on the sky and earth and yon sun s darting beam but how my senses reel! in what strange turmoil am I plunged! my fevered breath in quick spasmodic gasps escapes my lungs How now? why am I lying here made fast with cables like a ship my brawny chest and arms tied to a shattered piece of masonry with corpses for my neighbours while o er the floor my bow and arrows are scattered that erst like trusty squires to my arm both kept me safe and were kept safe of me? Surely I am not come a second time to Hades halls having just returned from thence for Eurystheus? No I do not see Sisyphus with his stone or Pluto or his queen Demeter s child Surely I am distraught I cannot remember where I am Ho there! which of my friends is near or far to help me in my perplexity? For I have no clear knowledge of things once familiar

Am My aged friends shall I approach the scene of my sorrow?

Ch Yes and let me go with thee nor desert thee in thy trouble

He Father why dost thou weep and veil thy eyes standing aloof from thy beloved son?

Am My child! mine still for all thy misery

He Why what is there so sad in my case that thou dost weep?

Am That which might make any of the gods weep were he to suffer so

He A bold assertion that but thou art not yet explaining what has happened

Am Thine own eyes see that if by this time thou art restored to thy senses

He Fill in thy sketch if any change awaits my life

Am I will explain if thou art no longer mad as a fiend of hell

He God help us! what suspicions these dark hints of thine again excite!

Am I am still doubtful whether thou art in thy sober senses

He I never remember being mad

Am Am I to loose my son old friends or what?

He Loose and say who bound me for I feel shame at this

Am Rest content with what thou knowest of thy woes the rest forego

He Enough! I have no wish to probe thy silence

Am O Zeus dost thou behold these deeds proceeding from the throne of Hera?

He What! have I suffered something from her enmity?

Am A truce to the goddess! attend to thy own troubles

He I am undone what mischance wilt thou unfold?

Am See here the corpses of thy children

He O horror! what hideous sight is here? ah me!

Am My son against thy children hast thou waged unnatural war

He War! what meanst thou? who killed these?

Am Thou and thy bow and some god whoso he be that is to blame

He What sayst thou? what have I done? speak father thou messenger of evil

Am Thou wert distraught tis a sad explanation thou art asking

He Was it I that slew my wife also?

Am Thy own unaided arm hath done all this

He Ah woe is me! a cloud of sorrow wraps me round

Am The reason this that I lament thy fate

He Did I dash my house to pieces or incite others thereto

Am Naught know I save this that thou art utterly undone

He Where did my frenzy seize me? where did it destroy me?

Am In the moment thou wert purifying thyself with fire at the altar

my own children's murderer Give them burial and lay them o t in death with the tribute of a tear for the law fo bids my doing so Rest the r heads upon their mother's bosom a d fold them n her arms, sad pled es of our uni n whom I alas! unw ttingly did slay And when thou hast buried these dead h e on here still in b tterness maybe but still con strain thy soul to share my sorrows. O children! he ho begat you, your own father hath been your destr yer and y hav had no profit of my triumphs, all my restless toil to win you a fair name in life, a glorious guerdon from a sire Thee too unhappy wife, this hand hath slain a poor return to make thee for preservin mine h nour so safe, for ll the cary watch thou long hast kept within my house Alas for you, my wife, my sons! and woe for me, how sad my lot, cut off from wife and child! Ah! t'ese kisses, bitter sweet! these weapons which tis pain to own! I am not sure wh th r to keep or let them go dangl n at my s de they thus w ll say "With us didst thou de tro child n and wife we a e thy child en s slayers, and thou keepest us." Shall I carry th m after that? what answer can I make? Y t am I to strip me of these weapons, the comrades f my gl ious career in Hellas, and put myself thereby in the power of my foes, to die a death of sham ? N ! I mu t not let them go but keep them, though it grieve me. In one thing The seus, help my misery com to A gos with me and aid in settlin my *reward for bri ging Cerberus* thither lest if I go all alone my so row for my sons d me some hurt

O land of Cadmus, and all ye f lk of Thebes! cut off your hair and mourn with me go to my chil d en s burial and with u ited d ge lame t alike the dead a d me fo on all of us hath Hera inflicted the same cru l blow f destru tion

Th Rise unhapp man! thou hast had thy fill of tears.

He I cannot rise my limbs are rooted here.

Th Yea even the stro g are o erthrown by misfortunes.

He Ah! would I could grow into a *stone* upon this spot obli ous of trouble!

Th Peac ! g e thy hand to a fri nd nd helper

H N y l t me not w pe off the blood upon thy robe.

Th W pe t ff and *spare not* I will not say thee nay

He Reft of my own sons, I find thee as a son to me

Th Throw thy arm about my neck I will be thy gu de

He A pair of friends in sooth are we but one a man of sorrows. Ah! a ed sire this is the kind of man to make a friend

Am Blest in her sons, the country that gave him birth!

He O Theseus, turn me back again to see my babes

Th What charm dost think to find in this to soothe thy soul?

H I long to do so, and would fa n embrace my sire

Am Here am I my son thy wish is no less dear to me.

Th Hast thou so *short a memory for thy troubles?*

H All that I endured of yore was easier to bear than this.

Th If men see thee play the woman they will sc ff

He Have I by li ing g own so abject in *thy* sight? twa n t so onc methi ks.

Th Aye too much so for how dost *show thyself* the gl rious *Heracles of yore?*

He What about thyself? what kind *of hero wert* thou when in trouble n the world below?

Th I *was worse* than anyone as far as courage went

He How then canst thou say of me that I am abased by my troubles?

Th Forwa d!

H Farewell my aged sire!

Am Farewell to thee, my son!

He Bury my ch ldren as I said

Am But who will bury me my son?

H I w ll

Am Wh n wilt thou come?

H After thou hast buried my *children*

Am How?

He I will fetch thee fr m Thebes to Athens. But carry my ch ldren within a g evous b rden to the earth And I fter ru ni g my house by deeds of shame will f llow in the wake of Theseus a total w eck. Whoso prefers wealth or might t the possessi n of good fri nds, thinketh amiss

Ch With grief and many bitter tear we go our way robbed of all we prized most dearly

Exeunt OMNES

He I will die and return to that world below whence I have just come

Th Such language is fit for any common fellow

He Ah! thine is the advice of one outside sorrow s pale

Th Are these indeed the words of Heracles the much enduring?

He Never so much as this though Endurance must have a limit

Th Is this man s benefactor his chiefest friend?

He Man brings no help to me no! Hera has her way

Th Never will Hellas suffer thee to die through sheer perversity

He Hear me a moment that I may enter the lists with arguments in answer to thy admonitions and I will unfold to thee why life now as well as formerly has been unbearable to me First I am the son of a man who incurred the guilt of blood before he married my mother Alcmena by slaying her aged sire Now when the foundation is badly laid at birth needs must the race be cursed with woe and Zeus whoever this Zeus may be begot me as a butt for Hera s hate yet be not thou vexed thereat old man for thee rather than Zeus do I regard as my father Then whilst I was yet being suckled that bride of Zeus did foist into my cradle fearsome snakes to compass my death After I was grown to man s estate of all the toils I then endured what need to tell? of all the lions Typhons triple bodied and giants that I slew or of the battle I won against the hosts of four legged Centaurs? or how when I had killed the hydra that monster with a ring of heads with power to grow again I passed through countless other toils besides and came unto the dead to fetch to the light at the bidding of Eurystheus the three headed hound hell s porter Last ah woe is me! have I perpetrated this bloody deed to crown the sorrows of my house with my children s murder To this sore strait am I come no longer may I dwell in Thebes the city that I love for suppose I stay to what temple or gathering of friends shall I repair? For mine is no curse that invites address Shall I go to Argos? how can I when I am an exile from my country? Well is there a single other city I can fly to? And if there were am I to be looked at askance as a marked man branded by cruel stabbing tongues Is not this the son of Zeus that once murdered wife and children? Plague take him from the land!

Now to one who was erst called happy such changes are a grievous thing though he who is always unfortunate feels no such pain for sorrow is his birthright This methinks is the piteous pass I shall one day come to earth for instance will cry out forbidding me to touch her the sea and the river springs will refuse me a crossing and I shall become like Ixion who revolves in chains upon that wheel Wherefore this is best that henceforth I be seen by non of the Hellenes amongst whom in happier days I lived in bliss What right have I to live? what profit can I have in the possession of a useless impious life? So let that noble wife of Zeus break forth in dancing beating with buskined foot on heaven s bright floor for now hath she worked her heart s desire in utterly confounding the chiefest of Hellas sons Who would pray to such a goddess? Her jealousy of Zeus for his love of a woman hath destroyed the benefactors of Hellas, guiltless though they were

Ch This is the work of none other of the gods than the wife of Zeus thou art right in that surmise.

Th [1] rather than to go on suffering There is not a man alive that hath wholly scaped misfortune s taint nor any god either if what poets sing is true Have they not intermarried in ways that law forbids? Have they not thrown fathers into ignominious chains to gain the sovereign power? Still they inhabit Olympus and brave the issue of their crimes And yet what shalt thou say in thy defence, if thou a child of man dost kick against the pricks of fate while they do not? Nay then leave Thebes in compliance with the law and come with me to the city of Pallas There when I have purified thee of thy pollution will I give thee temples and the half of all I have Yea I will give thee all those presents I received from the citizens for saving their children seven sons and daughters seven in the day I slew the bull of Crete for I have plots of land assigned me throughout the country these shall henceforth be called after thee by men whilst thou livest and at thy death when thou art gone to Hades halls the city of Athens shall unite in exalting thy honour with sacrifices and a monument of stone For tis a noble crown for citizens to win from Hellas even a reputation fair by helping a man of worth This is the return that I will make thee for saving me for now art thou in need of friends. But when heaven delights to honour a man he has no need of friends for the god s aid when he chooses to give it is enough

He Tush! this is quite beside the question of my troubles For my part I do not believe that the gods indulge in unholy unions and as for putting fetters on parents hands I have never thought that worthy of credit nor will I now be so persuaded nor again that one god is naturally lord and master of another For the deity if he be really such, has no wants these are miserable fictions of the poets. But I for all my piteous plight reflected whether I should let myself be branded as a coward for giving up my life For whoso schooleth not his frail mortal nature to bear fate s buffets as he ought will never be able to withstand even a man s weapon I will harden my heart against death and seek thy city with grateful thanks for all thou offerest me

Of countless troubles have I tasted God knows, but never yet did I faint at any or shed a single tear nay nor e er dreamt that I should come to this, to let the tear drop fall But now it seems I must be fortune s slave Well let it pass old father mine thou seest me go forth to exile and in me beholdest

[1]There is a lacuna before line 1313

For thou, if thou art really wise, must not suffer the same poor mortal to be for ever wretched.

Exit JOCASTA.

Enter OLD RETAINER *and* ANTIGONE.

Old Retainer (*From the roof*) Antigone, choice blossom in a father's house, although thy mother allowed thee at thy earnest entreaty to leave the maiden chamber for the topmost story of the house, thence to behold the Argive host, yet stay a moment that I may first reconnoitre the path, whether there be any of the citizens visible on the road, lest reproach, little as it matters to a slave like me, fasten on thee, my royal mistress; and when I am quite sure I will tell thee everything that I saw and heard from the Argives, when I carried the terms of the truce to and fro between this city and Polynices. (*After a slight pause*) No, there is no citizen approaching the palace; so mount the ancient cedar steps, and view the plains that skirt Ismenus and the fount of Dirce to see the mighty host of foemen.

Antigone Stretch out thy hand to me from the stairs, the hand of age to youth, helping me to mount.

O. R. There! clasp it, my young mistress; thou art come at a lucky moment; for Pelasgia's host is just upon the move, and their several contingents are separating.

A. O Hecate, dread child of Latona! the plain is one blaze of bronze.

O. R. Ah! this is no ordinary home-coming of Polynices; with many a knight and clash of countless arms he comes.

An. Are the gates fast barred, and the brazen bolts shot home into Amphion's walls of stone?

O. R. Never fear! all is safe within the town. But mark him who cometh first, if thou wouldst learn his name.

An. Who is that with the white crest, who marches in the van, lightly bearing on his arm a buckler all of bronze?

O. R. A chieftain, lady —

An. Who is he? whose son? his name? tell me, old man.

O. R. Mycenae claims him for her son; in Lerna's glens he dwells, the prince Hippomedon.

An. Ah! how proud and terrible his mien! like to an earth-born giant he moves, with stars engraved upon his targe, resembling not a child of earth.

O. R. Dost see yon chieftain crossing Dirce's stream?

An. His harness is quite different. Who is that?

O. R. Tydeus, the son of Oeneus; true Aetolian spirit fires his breast.

A. Is this the man, who wedded a sister of the wife of Polynices? What a foreign look his armour has! half barbarian he!

O. R. Yes, my child; all Aetolians carry shields, and are most unerring marksmen with their darts.

A. How art thou so sure of these descriptions, old man?

O. R. I carefully noted the blazons on their shields before, when I went with the terms of the truce to those who bear them; so when I see them now I know who carry them.

An. Who is that youth passing close to the tomb of Zethus, with long flowing hair, but a look of fury in his eye? is he a captain? for crowds of warriors follow at his heels.

O. R. That is Parthenopaeus, Atalanta's son.

An. May Artemis, who hies o'er the hills with his mother, lay him low with an arrow, for coming against my city to sack it!

O. R. May it be so, my daughter; but with justice are they come hither, and my fear is that the gods will take the rightful view.

An. Where is he who was born of the same mother as I was by a cruel destiny? Oh! tell me, old friend, where Polynices is.

O. R. He is yonder, ranged next to Adrastus near the tomb of Niobe's seven unwed daughters. Dost see him?

A. I see him, yes! but not distinctly; 'tis but the outline of his form, the semblance of his stalwart limbs I see. Would I could speed through the sky, swift as a cloud before the wind, towards my own dear brother, and throw my arms about my darling's neck, so long, poor boy! an exile. How bright his golden weapons flash like the sun-god's morning rays!

O. R. He will soon be here, to fill thy heart with joy, according to the truce.

A. Who is that old man on yonder car driving snow-white steeds?

O. R. That, lady, is the prophet Amphiaraus; with him are the victims, whose streaming blood the thirsty earth will drink.

A. Daughter of Latona with the dazzling zone, O moon, thou orb of golden light! how quietly, with what restraint he drives, goading first one horse, then the other! But where is Capaneus who utters those dreadful threats against this city?

O. R. Yonder he is, calculating how he may scale the towers, taking the measure of our walls from base to summit.

A. O Nemesis, with booming thunder peals of Zeus and blazing levin bright, thine it is to silence such presumptuous boasting. Is this the man, who says he will give the maids of Thebes as captives of his spear to Mycenae's dames, to Lerna's Trident, and the waters of Amymone dear to Poseidon, when he hath thrown the toils of slavery round them? Never, never, Artemis, my queen revered, child of Zeus with locks of gold, may I endure the yoke of slavery!

O. R. My daughter, get thee within and abide beneath the shelter of the maiden chamber, now that thou hast had thy wish and seen all that thy heart desired; for I see a crowd of women moving toward the royal palace, confusion reigning in the city. Now the race of women by nature loves scandal; and if they get some small handle for their gossip they exaggerate it, for they seem to take a pleasure in saying everything bad of one another.

Exeunt ANTIGONE *and* OLD RETAINER.

THE PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

JOCASTA	ETEOCLES
OLD RETAINER	CREON
ANTIGONE	TEIRESIAS
CHORUS OF PHŒNICIAN MAIDENS	MENŒCEUS
	FIRST MESSENGER
POLYNICES	SECOND MESSENGER
ŒDIPUS	

Before the royal palace at Thebes Enter JOCASTA

Jocasta O sun god who cleavest thy way along the starry sky mounted on golden studded car rolling on thy path of flame behind fleet coursers how curst the beam thou didst shed on Thebes the day that Cadmus left Phœnicia s realm beside the sea and reached this land! He it was that in days long gone wedded Harmonia the daughter of Cypris and begat Polydore from whom they say sprung Labdacus and Laius from him I am known as the daughter of Menœceus and Creon is my brother by the same mother Men call me Jocasta for so my father named me and I am married to Laius Now when he was still childless after being wedded to me a long time he went and questioned Phœbus craving moreover that our love might be crowned with sons born to his house But the god said King of Thebes for horses famed! seek not to beget children against the will of heaven for if thou beget a son that child shall slay thee and all thy house shall wade through blood But he yielding to his lust in a drunken fit begat a son of me and when his babe was born conscious of his sin and of the god s warning he gave the child to shepherds to expose in Hera s meadow on mount Cithæron after piercing his ankles with iron spikes whence it was that Hellas named him Œdipus But the keepers of the horses of Polybus finding him took him home and laid him in the arms of their mistress So she suckled the child that I had borne and persuaded her husband she was its mother Soon as my son was grown to man s estate the tawny beard upon his cheek either because he had guessed the fraud or learnt it from another he set out for the shrine of Phœbus eager to know for certain who his parents were and likewise Laius my husband was on his way thither anxious to find out if the child he had exposed was dead And they twain met where the branching roads to Phocis unite and the charioteer of Laius called to him Out of the way stranger room for my lord! But he with never a word strode on in his pride and the horses with their hoofs drew blood from the tendons of his feet Then—but why need I tell aught beyond the sad issue?—son slew father and taking his chariot gave it to Polybus his foster father Now when the Sphinx was grievously harrying our city after my husband s death my brother Creon proclaimed that he would wed me to any who should guess the riddle of that crafty maiden By same strange chance my own son Œdipus guessed the Sphinx s riddle and so he became king of this land and received its sceptre as his prize and married his mother all unwitting luckless wretch! nor did I his mother know that I was wedded to my son and I bore him two sons Eteocles and the hero Polynices and two daughters as well the one her father called Ismene the other which was the elder I named Antigone Now when Œdipus that awful sufferer learnt that I his wedded wife was his mother too he inflicted a ghastly outrage upon his eyes tearing the bleeding orbs with a golden brooch But since my sons have grown to bearded men they have confined their father closely that his misfortune needing as it did full many a shift to hide it might be forgotten He is still living in the palace but his misfortunes have so unhinged him that he imprecates the most unholy curses on his sons praying that they may have to draw the sword before they share this house between them So they fearful that heaven may accomplish his prayer if they dwell together have made an agreement arranging that Polynices the younger should first leave the land in voluntary exile while Eteocles should stay and hold the sceptre for a year and then change places. But as soon as Eteocles was seated high in power he refused to give up the throne and drove Polynices into exile from the kingdom so Polynices went to Argos and married into the family of Adrastus, and having collected a numerous force of Argives is leading them hither and he is come up against our seven gated walls demanding the sceptre of his father and his share in the kingdom Wherefore I to end their strife have prevailed on one son to meet the other under truce before appealing to arms and the messenger I sent tells me that he will come O Zeus whose home is heaven s radiant vault save us and grant that my sons may be reconciled!

P Mother I have come amongst enemies wisely or foolishly but all men needs must love their native land; whoso saith otherwise is pleased to say so but his thoughts are turned elsewhere. So fearful was I and in such terror lest my brother might slay me by treachery that I made my way through the city sword in hand casting my eyes all round me. My only hope is the truce and thy plighted word which induced me to enter my paternal walls; and many a tear I shed by the way, seeing after a weary while my home and the altars of the gods, the training ground, scene of my childhood, and Dirce's fount from which I was unjustly driven to sojourn in a strange city with tears ever gushing from mine eyes. Yea and to add to my grief I see thee with thy hair cut short and clad in sable robe; woe is me for my sorrows!

How terrible, dear mother, is hatred 'twixt those once near and dear; how hard it makes all reconciliation! What doth my aged sire within the house, his sight all darkness now? what of my sister twain? Ah! they I know bewail my bitter exile.

Jo Some god with fell intent is plaguing the race of Oedipus. Thus it all began; I broke God's law and bore a son, and in an evil hour married thy father and thou wert born. But why repeat these horrors? what Heaven sends we have to bear. I am afraid to ask thee what I fain would, for fear of wounding thy feelings; yet I long to.

Po Nay, question me, leave naught unsaid; for thy will, mother, is my pleasure too.

Jo Well then, first I ask thee what I long to have answered. What means exile from one's country? is it a great evil?

Po The greatest; harder to bear than tell.

Jo What is it like? what is it galls the exile?

Po One thing most of all; he cannot speak his mind.

Jo This is a slave's lot thou describest, to refrain from uttering what one thinks.

Po The follies of his rulers must he bear.

Jo That too is bitter, to join in the folly of fools.

Po Yet to gain our ends we must submit against our nature.

Jo Hope, they say, is the exile's food.

Po Aye, hope that looks so fair; but she is ever in the future.

Jo But doth not time expose her futility?

Po She hath a certain winsome charm in misfortune.

Jo Whence hadst thou means to live, ere thy marriage found it for thee?

Po One while I had enough for the day, and then maybe I had it not.

Jo Did not thy father's friends and whilom guests assist thee?

Po Seek to be prosperous; once let fortune lour, and the aid supplied by friends is naught.

Jo Did not thy noble breeding exalt thy horn for thee?

Po Poverty is a curse; breeding would not find me food.

Jo Man's dearest treasure then, it seems, is his country.

Po No words of thine could tell how dear.

Jo How was it thou didst go to Argos? what was thy scheme?

Po I know not; the deity summoned me thither in accordance with my destiny.

Jo He doubtless had some wise design; but how didst thou win thy wife?

Po Loxias had given Adrastus an oracle.

Jo What was it? what meanest thou? I cannot guess.

Po That he should wed his daughters to a boar and a lion.

Jo What hadst thou, my son, to do with the name of beasts?

Po It was night when I reached the porch of Adrastus.

Jo In search of a resting place, or wandering thither in thy exile?

Po Yes, I wandered thither; and so did another like me.

Jo Who was he? he too it seems was in evil plight.

Po Tydeus, son of Oeneus, was his name.

Jo But why did Adrastus liken you to wild beasts?

Po Because we came to blows about our bed.

Jo Was it then that the son of Talaus understood the oracle?

Po Yes, and he gave to us his daughters twain.

Jo Art thou blest or curst in thy marriage?

Po As yet I have no fault to find with it.

Jo How didst thou persuade an army to follow thee hither?

Po To me and to Tydeus who is my kinsman by marriage, Adrastus sware an oath, even to the husbands of his daughters twain, that he would restore us both to our country, me first. So many a chief from Argos and Mycenae has joined me, doing *me* a bitter though needful service, for 'tis against my own city I am marching. Now I call heaven to witness, that it is not willingly I have raised my arm against parents whom I love full well. *But to thee, mother, it belongs to dissolve this unhappy feud*, and, by reconciling brothers in love, to end my troubles and thine and this *whole city's*. 'Tis an old-world maxim, but I will cite it for all that: "Men set most store by wealth, and of all things in this world it hath the greatest power." This am I come to secure at the head of my countless host; for good birth is naught if poverty go with it.

Ch Lo! Eteocles comes hither to discuss the truce. Thine the task, O mother Jocasta, to speak such words as may reconcile thy sons.

Enter ETEOCLES

Eteocles Mother, I am here; but it was only to pleasure thee I came. What am I to do? Let some one begin the conference; for I stopped marshalling the citizens in double lines around the walls, that I might hear thy arbitration between us; for it is under this truce that thou hast persuaded me to admit this fellow within the walls.

Enter CHORUS

Chorus From the Tyrian main I come an offering choice for Loxias from a Phœnician isle to minister to Phœbus in his halls where his fane lies nestling neath the snow swept peaks of Parnassus over the Ionian sea I rowed my course for above the plains unharvested that fringe the coast of Sicily the boisterous west wind coursed piping sweetest music in the sky

Chosen from my city as beauty s gift for Loxias to the land of Cadmus I came sent thither to the towers of Laius the home of my kin the famous *sons of Agenor and there I became the handmaid* of Phœbus dedicated like his offerings of wrought gold But as yet the water of Castaly is waiting for me to bedew the maiden glory of my tresses for the service of Phœbus

Hail! thou rock that kindlest bright fire above the twin peaked heights of Dionysus Hail! thou vine that day by day makest the lush bunches of thy grapes to drip Hail! awful cavern of the serpent and the god s outlook on the hills and sacred mount by snow storms lashed! would I were now circling in the dance of the deathless god free from wild alarms having left Dirce ere this for the vales of Phœbus at the centre of the world! But now I find the impetuous god of war is come to battle before these walls and hath kindled murder s torch in this city God grant he fail! for a friend s sorrows are also mine and if this land with its seven towers suffer any mischance Phœnicia s realm must share it *Ah me! our stock is one all children we of Io* that hornèd maid whose sorrows I partake Around th city a dense array of serried shields is rousing the *spectre of bloody strife whose issue Ares shall soon* learn to his cost if he brings upon the sons of Œdipus the horrors of the curse O Argos city of Pelasgia! I dread thy prowess and the vengeance Heaven sends for he who cometh against our home in full panoply is entering the lists with justice on his side

Enter POLYNICES

Polynices Those who kept watch and ward at the gate admitted me so readily within the walls that my only fear is that now they have caught me in their toils they will not let me out unscathed so I must turn my eye in every direction hither and thither to guard against all treachery Armed with this sword though *I shall* inspire *myself* with the confidence born of boldness (*Starting*) What ho! who goes there? or is it an idle sound I fear? Every *thing seems a danger to venturous spirits when their* feet begin to tread an enemy s country Still I trust my mother and at the same time mistrust her for *persuading* me to come hither under truce Well there is help at hand for the altar s hearth is close and there are people in the palace Come let me sheath my sword in its dark scabbard and ask these maidens standing near the house who they are

Ladies of another land tell me from what country ye come to the halls of Hellas

Ch Phœnicia is my native *land where I was born* and bred and Agenor s children s children sent me hither as a first fruits of the spoils of war for Phœbus but when the noble son of Œdipus was about to escort me to the hallowed oracle and the altars of Loxias came Argives meantime against his city Now tell me in return who *thou* art that comest to this fortress of the Theban realm with its seven gates.

Po My father was Œdipus the son of Laius my mother Jocasta daughter of Menœceus and I am called Polynices by the folk of Thebes

Ch O kinsman of Agenor s race my royal masters who sent me hither at thy feet prince I throw myself according to the custom of my home At *last art thou come to thy native land at last! Hail* to thee! all hail! Come forth my honoured mistress, open wide the doors Dost hear O mother of this *chief? Why art thou delaying to leave the sheltering* roof to fold thy son in thy embrace?

Enter JOCASTA

Jo Maidens I hear you call in your Phœnician tongue and my old feet drag their tottering steps to meet my son O my son my son at last after many a long day I see thee face to face throw thy arms about thy mother s bosom reach hither thy cheek to me and thy dark locks of clustering hair overshadowing my neck therewith Hail to thee! all hail! scarce now restored to thy mother s arms when hope and expectation both were dead What can I say to thee? how recall in every way by word by deed the bliss of days long past expressing my joy in the mazy measures of the dance? Ah! my son thou didst leave thy father s halls desolate when *thy brother s despite drove thee thence in exile* Truly thou wert missed alike by thy friends and Thebes This was why I cut off my silvered locks *and let them fall for grief with many a tear* not clad in robes of white my son but instead thereof taking for my wear these sorry sable tatters while within the palace that aged one with sightless orbs ever nursing the sorrow of a double regret for the pair of brethren estranged from their home rushed to lay hands upon himself with the sword or by the noose suspended o er his chamber roof moaning his curses on his sons and now he buries himself in darkness weeping ever and lamenting And thou my child—I hear thou hast taken an alien to wife and art begetting children to thy joy in thy home they tell me thou art courting a foreign alliance a *ceaseless regret to me thy mother and to Laius thy* ancestor to have this woful marriage foisted on us Twas no hand of mine that lit for thee the marriage torch as custom ordains and as a happy mother ought no part had Ismenus at thy wedding in supplying the luxurious bath and there was silence through th streets of Thebes what time thy young bride entered her home Curses on them! whether it be the sword or strife or thy sire that is to blame or heaven s visitation that hath burst so riotously upon the house of Œdipus for on me is come *all* the anguish of these troubles

Ch Wondrous dear to woman is the child of her *travail and all her race hath some affection for its* babes.

Po. Mother, I have come amongst enemies wisely or foolishly; but all men needs must love their native land; whoso saith otherwise is pleased to say so but his thoughts are turned elsewhere. So fearful was I and in such terror, lest my brother might slay me by treachery, that I made my way through the city sword in hand, casting my eyes all round me. My only hope is the truce and thy plighted word which induced me to enter my paternal walls; and many a tear I shed by the way, seeing after a weary while my home and the altars of the gods, the training ground, scene of my childhood, and Dirce's founts from which I was unjustly driven to sojourn in a strange city, with tears ever gushing from mine eyes. Yea, and to add to my grief I see thee with hair cut short and clad in sable robe; woe is me for my sorrows!

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Po. Ask, question me, leave naught unsaid; for thy will, mother, is my pleasure too.

Jo. Well then, first I ask thee what I long to have answered. What means exile from one's country? is it a great evil?

Po. The greatest; harder to bear than tell.

Jo. What is it like? what is it galls the exile?

Po. One thing most of all; he cannot speak his mind.

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Po. The follies of his rulers must he bear.

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Jo. Hope, they say, is the exile's food.

Po. Aye, hope that looks so fair; but she is ever in the future.

Jo. But doth not time expose her futility?

Po. She hath a certain winsome charm in misfortune.

Jo. Whence hadst thou means to live, ere thy marriage found a living for thee?

Po. One while I had enough for the day, and then maybe I had it not.

Jo. Did not thy father's friends and whilom guests assist thee?

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Jo. Man's dearest treasure then, it seems, is his country.

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Jo. How was it thou didst go to Argos? what was thy scheme?

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Jo. He doubtless had some wise design; but how didst thou win thy wife?

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Jo. What was it? what meanest thou? I cannot guess.

Po. That he should wed his daughters to a boar and a lion.

Jo. What hadst thou, my son, to do with the name of beasts?

Po. It was night when I reached the porch of Adrastus.

Jo. In search of a resting-place, or wandering thither in thy exile?

Po. Yes, I wandered thither; and so did another like me.

Jo. Who was he? he too it seems was in evil plight.

Po. Tydeus, son of Œneus, was his name.

Jo. But why did Adrastus liken you to wild beasts?

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Jo. Was it then that the son of Talaus understood the oracle?

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Po. As yet I have no fault to find with it.

Jo. How didst thou persuade an army to follow thee hither?

Po. To me and to Tydeus who is my kinsman by marriage, Adrastus sware an oath, even to the husbands of his daughters twain, that he would restore us both to our country, but me the first. So many a chief from Argos and Mycenæ has joined me, doing me a bitter though needful service, for 'tis against my own city I am marching. Now I call heaven to witness, that it is not willingly I have raised my arm against parents whom I love full well. But to thee, mother, it belongs to dissolve this unhappy feud, and by reconciling brothers in love, to end my troubles and thine and this whole city's. 'Tis an old world maxim, but I will cite it for all that, "Men set most store by wealth, and of all things in this world it hath the greatest power." This am I come to secure at the head of my countless host; for good birth is naught if poverty go with it.

Ch. Lo! Eteocles comes hither to discuss the truce. Thine the task, O mother Jocasta, to speak such words as may reconcile thy sons.

Enter ETEOCLES

Eteocles. Mother, I am here; but it was only to pleasure thee I came. What am I to do? Let some one begin the conference; for I stopped marshalling the citizens in double lines around the walls, that I might hear thy arbitration between us; for it is under this truce that thou hast persuaded me to admit this fellow within the walls.

Jo Stay a moment haste never carries justice with it but slow deliberation oft attains a wise result Restrain the fierceness of thy look that panting rage for this is not the Gorgon s severed head but thy own brother whom thou seest here Thou too Polynices turn and face thy brother for if thou and he stand face to face thou wilt adopt a kindlier tone and lend a readier ear to him I fain would give you both one piece of wholesome counsel when a man that is angered with his friend confronts him face to face he ought only to keep in view the object of his coming forgetting all previous quarrels Polynices my son speak first for thou art come at the head of a Danaid host alleging wrongful treatment and may some god judge betwixt us and reconcile the trouble

Po The words of truth are simple and justice needs no subtle interpretations for it hath a fitness in itself but the words of injustice being rotten in themselves require clever treatment I provided for his interests and mine in our father s palace being anxious to avoid the curse which Œdipus once uttered against us of my own free will I left the land allowing him to rule our country for one full year on condition that I should then take the sceptre in turn instead of plunging into deadly enmity and thereby doing others hurt or suffering it myself as is now the case But he after consenting to this and calling the gods to witness his oath has performed none of his promises but is still keeping the sovereignty in his own hands together with my share of our heritage Even now am I ready to take my own and dismiss my army from this land receiving my house in turn to dwell therein and once more restore it to him for a like period instead of ravaging our country and planting scaling ladders against the towers as I shall attempt to do if I do not get my rights Wherefore I call the gods to witness that spite of my just dealing in everything I am being unjustly robbed of my country by most godless fraud Here mother have I stated the several points on their own merits without collecting words to fence them in but urging a fair case I think alike in the judgment of skilled or simple folk

Ch To me at least albeit I was not born and bred in Hellas thy words seem full of sense

Et If all were unanimous in their ideas of honour and wisdom there would have been no strife to make men disagree but as it is fairness and equality have no existence in this world beyond the name there is really no such thing For instance mother I will tell thee this without any concealment I would ascend to the rising of the stars and the sun or dive beneath the earth were I able so to do to win a monarch s power the chief of things divine Therefore mother I will never yield this blessing to another but keep it for myself for it were a coward s act to lose the greater and to win the less. Besides I blush to think that he should gain his object by coming with arms in his hand and ravaging the land for this were foul disgrace to glorious Thebes if I should yield my sceptre up to him for fear of Argive might He ought not mother to have attempted reconcilement by armed force, for words compass everything that even the sword of an enemy might effect Still if on any other terms he cares to dwell here he may but the sceptre will I never willingly let go Shall I become his slave when I can be his master? Never! Wherefore come fire come sword! harness your steeds fill the plains with chariots for I will not forego my throne for him For if we must do wrong to do so for a kingdom were the fairest cause but in all else virtue should be our aim

Ch Fair words are only called for when the deeds they crown are fair otherwise they lose their charm and offend justice

Jo Eteocles my child it is not all evil that attends old age sometimes its experience can offer sager counsel than can youth Oh! why my son art thou so set upon ambition that worst of deities? Forbear that goddess knows not justice many are the homes and cities once prosperous that she hath entered and left after the ruin of her votaries she it is thou madly followest Better far my son prize equality that ever linketh friend to friend city to city and allies to each other for equality is man s natural law but the less is always in opposition to the greater ushering in the dayspring of dislike For it is equality that hath set up for man measures and divisions of weights and hath distinguished numbers night s sightless orb and radiant sun proceed upon their yearly course on equal terms and neither of them is envious when it has to yield Though sun and gloom then both are servants in man s interests, wilt not thou be content with thy fair share of thy heritage and give the same to him? if not why where is justice? Why prize beyond its worth the monarch s power injustice in prosperity? why think so much of the admiring glances turned on rank? Nay tis vanity Or wouldst thou by heaping riches in thy halls heap up toil therewith? what advantage is it? tis but a name for the wise find that enough which suffices for their wants Man indeed hath no possessions of his own we do but hold a stewardship of the gods property and when they will they take it back again Riches make no settled home but are as transient as the day Come suppose I put before thee two alternatives whether thou wilt rule or save thy city? Wilt thou say Rule ?

Again if Polynices win the day and his Argive warriors rout the ranks of Thebes thou wilt see this city conquered and many a captive maid brutally dishonoured by the foe so will that wealth thou art so bent on getting become a grievous bane to Thebes but still ambition fills thee This I say to thee and this to thee Polynices Adrastus hath conferred a foolish favour on thee and thou too hast shown little sense in coming to lay thy city waste Suppose thou conquer this land (which Heaven forefend!) tell me I conjure thee how wilt thou rear a trophy to Zeus? how wilt thou begin the sacrifice after thy country s conquest or inscribe the spoils at the streams of Inachus with— Polynices gave Thebes

r th flames and dedicated these sh elds to the gods Oh! never my son, be it thi e to w n such fame from Hella ! If on the other hand, thou art worsted and th br ther s cause p evail how shalt thou return to Argos, leavin countless dead beh nd? Som one will be sur to sa Out on thee! Adrastus, for th evil bridegroom thou hast brou ht u to thy house thanks to on maid s marriage ruin is com n us."

Towards two e ils, my son, art thou ha tening—loss of i uence the nd ruin in the midst of thy efforts here Oh! my children, lay aside your iolence two men s follies, once they meet result in ery deadl misch ef.

Ch O hea en, a ert these troubles and reconcile th sons f Œdipus in some wa !

Et Mother the season for parley is past the time w stil delay is the waste th good wishes are f no a ail for we hall ne er be reconciled except upon the terms already named, namely that I should keep the scept and be king of this land wherefore cease these ted ous warnings nd let m be (*Turning to* POLYNI E) And as for thee outside the walls, or die!

Po Who will lay me? who is so in ul erab e as to plun e his sword in my body without earn the self sam fate?

E Thou art nea him, a e very near dost see my arm

Po I see it but wealth is cowardly a cra en too fond of life.

Et W t then to meet a dastard thou camest with all that host to war?

P In general ca tion is better than foolhardiness.

Et Relyin on the truce whi h sa es thy life, thou turnest boaster

Po Onc mor I ask thee to *restore* my sceptre and shar in the kingdom.

Et I ha e nau ht to restore tis my own house, and I will d ell th rein

P Wha t nd keep mor than thy share?

Et Yes, I will. B on !

P O altars f my fathers god !

Et Whi h thou art here to raze.

Po Hear me

Et Who would hear thee aft r thou hast mar hed gainst th fatherland?

Po O temples of those gods that ride on snow hite steeds !

Et They hate thee

P I m bein driven from m cou try

Et Because thou camest t dri e others thence.

P U justl O god

Et Call on th god t Mycenæ not here.

P Thou hast outraged right—

Et B t I ha not lik thee become my country s foe.

Po By dri ing me forth witho t my portion.

Et I will sa thee to boot

Po O father dost thou hear what I am suffering?

Et Yea and he hears what thou art doing.

Po Thou too, mother mine?

Et Thou hast no ri ht to mention thy mother

Po O my city!

Et Get thee to Argos, and invoke the waters of Lerna

Po I will trouble not thyself all thanks to thee thou h mother mine

Et Forth from the land!

P I go yet grant me to behold my father

Et Thou halt not ha e thy wish.

Po At least then my tender sisters.

E No! them too thou shalt ne er see.

Po Ah sisters mine!

Et Why dost thou, their bitterest foe call on them?

Po Mother dear to thee at lea t farewell!

Jo A joyous faring, mine in sooth, my son!

Po Thy son no mor !

Jo Born to sorrow endless sorrow !!

P 'Tis because my brother treats me despitefully

Et I am t eated just the same.

Po Where wilt thou be stationed before the towers?

Et Wh ask m this?

Po I will array myself against thee for thy death

Et I too ha e the same desire

Jo Woe is m ! what will ye do, my sons?

P The e ent will show

Jo Oh fly your father s curse! *Exit* JOCASTA

Et Destruction seize our whole house!

Po Soon shall m sword be busy plun ed in gore. B t I call my nati e land and heaven too t witness, with what contumely and bitter treatment I am be i dri en forth as thou h I were a sla e not a son of Œdipus as much as he If aught happen to thee m city blame him, not m for I came not wil in f and all unwillin ly am I driven hence Fare w ll, king Phœbus lord of hi hways farewell palace and comrades farewell ye statues of the ods, at which men offer sheep for I know not if I shall ever add ess ou gain though hope is still wake which makes m confident that with hea en s help I shall slay this fellow and rul my nati e Thebes.

Exit POLYNICES

Et Forth from the land! twas a true name our father ga e thee, when, prompted by some god, he called thee Polynices, nam denotin strife

Ch To this land cam Cadmus of Tyre at whose feet n un oked h f r threw tself down gi i g ffect to an oracle on the spot wher the god re ponse bade him take up his abode in A nia s rich corn lands, where gushing Dirce s fair ri ers of water pour o e erdant fruitful fields here was born th Bromian god b her whom Zeus made a mother round whom the ivy twined t wreaths while he wa y t a babe swathing h m amid the covert of its green foliage as a *crowd* of happy destiny to be theme for Bacchic re elry amon the maids and w es inspired in Th bes.

There lay Ares murderous dragon a sa age warder wat h w th rovin eye th watered glens

Amphion nd Zethus, the Theban Dioscuri.

and quickening streams him did Cadmus slay with a jagged stone when he came thither *to draw him* lustral water smiting that fell head with a blow of his death dealing arm but by the counsel of Pallas motherless goddess he cast the teeth upon the earth *into deep furrows whence sprang to sight a mail* clad host above the surface of the soil but grim slaughter once again united them to the earth they loved bedewing with blood the ground that had *disclosed them to the sunlit breath of heaven*

Thee too Epaphus child of Zeus sprung from Io our ancestress I call on in my foreign tongue all hail to thee! hear my prayer uttered in accents *strange* and *visit this land* twas in thy *honour* thy descendants settled here and those goddesses of two-fold name Persephone and kindly Demeter or Earth the queen of all that feedeth every mouth won it for themselves send to the help of this land those torch bearing queens for to gods all things are easy

Et (*To an attendant*) Go fetch Creon on of Menœceus the brother of Jocasta my mother tell him I fain would confer with him on matters affecting our public and private weal before we set out to battle and the arraying of our host But lo! he comes and saves thee the trouble of going I see him on his way to my palace

Enter CREON

Creon To and fro have I been king Eteocles in my desire to see thee and have gone all round the gates and sentinels of Thebes in quest of thee

Et Why and I was anxious to see thee Creon for I found the terms of peace far from satisfactory when I came to confer with Polynices

Cr I hear that he has wider aims than Thebes relying on his alliance with the daughter of Adrastus and his army Well we must leave this dependent on the gods meantime I am come to tell thee our chief obstacle

Et What is that? I do not understand what thou sayest

Cr There is come one that was captured by the Argives

Et What news does he bring from their camp?

Cr He says the Argive army intend at once to draw a ring of troops round the city of Thebes about its towers

Et In that case the city of Cadmus must lead out its troops

Cr Whither? art thou so young that thine eyes see not what they should?

Et Across yon trenches for immediate action

Cr Our Theban forces are small while theirs are numberless

Et I well know they are reputed brave

Cr No mean repute have those Argives among Hellenes

Et Never fear! I will soon fill the plain with their dead

Cr I could wish it so but I see great difficulties in this

Et Trust me I will not keep my host within the walls

Cr Still victory is entirely a matter of good counsel

Et Art anxious then that I should have recourse to any other scheme?

Cr Aye to every scheme before running the risk once for all

Et Suppose we fall on them by night from ambuscade?

Cr Good! provided in the event of defeat thou canst secure thy return hither

Et Night equalizes risks though it rather favours daring

Cr The darkness of night is a terrible time to suffer disaster

Et Well shall I fall upon them as they sit at meat?

Cr That might cause a scare but victory is what we want

Et Dirce s ford is deep enough to prevent their retreat

Cr No plan so good as to keep well guarded

Et What if our cavalry make a sortie against the host of Argos?

Cr Their troops too are fenced all round with chariots

Et What then can I do? am I to surrender the city to the foe?

Cr Nay nay! but of thy wisdom form some plan

Et Pray what scheme is wiser than mine?

Cr They have seven chiefs I hear

Et What is their appointed task? their might can be but feeble

Cr To lead the several companies and storm our seven gates

Et What are we to do? I will not wait till every chance is gone

Cr Choose seven chiefs thyself to set against them at the gates

Et To lead our companies or to fight single handed?

Cr Choose our very bravest men to lead the troops

Et I understand to repel attempts at scaling our walls

Cr With others to share the command for one man sees not everything

Et Selecting them for courage or thoughtful prudence?

Cr For both for one is naught without the other

Et It shall be done I will away to our seven towers and post captains at the gates *as thou advisest* pitting them man for man against the foe To tell thee each one s name were grievous waste of time when the foe is camped beneath our very walls But *I will go that my hands may no longer hang* idle May I meet my brother face to face and encounter him hand to hand even to the death for coming to waste my country! But if I suffer any mischance *thou must see to the marriage* twixt Antigone my sister and Hæmon thy son and now as I go forth to battle I ratify their previous espousal Thou art my mother s brother so why need I say more? take care of her as she deserves both for thy own sake

and mine. As for him, since he hath been guilty of folly against himself in putting out his eyes, small praise have I for him; by his curses maybe he will slay us too. One thing only have we still to do, to ask Teiresias, the seer, if he has aught to tell of heaven's will. Thy son Menoeceus, who bears thy father's name, will I send to fetch Teiresias hither, Creon; for with thee he will readily converse, though I have ere now so scorned his art prophetic to his face, that he has reason to reproach me. This commandment, Creon, I lay upon the city and thee: should my cause prevail, never give Polynices' corpse a grave in Theban soil, and if so be some friend should bury him, let death reward the man. Thus far to thee; and to my servants thus, bring forth my arms and coat of mail, that I may start at once for the appointed combat, with right to lead to victory. To save our city we will pray to Caution, the best god to serve our end. *Exit Eteocles.*

Ch. O Ares, god of toil and trouble! why, why art thou possessed by a love of blood and death, out of harmony with the festivals of Bromius? 'Tis for no crowns of dancers fair that thou dost toss thy youthful curls to the breeze, singing the while to the lute's soft breath a strain to charm the dancers' feet; but with warriors clad in mail thou dost lead the sombre revelry, breathing into Argive breasts a lust for Theban blood; with no wild waving of the thyrsus, clad in fawnskin thou dancest, but with chariot and bitted steeds wheelest thy charger strong of hoof. O'er the waters of Ismenus in wild career thou art urging thy horses, inspiring Argive breasts with hate of the earth-born race, arraying in brazen harness against these stone-built walls a host of warriors armed with buckler.

Truly Strife is a goddess to fear, who devised these troubles for the princes of this land, for the much-enduring sons of Labdacus.

O Cithaeron, apple of the eye of Artemis, holy vale of leaves, amid whose snows full many a beast lies couched, would thou hadst never reared the child exposed to die, Oedipus the fruit of Jocasta's womb, when as a babe he was cast forth from his home, marked with a golden brooch; and would the Sphinx, that winged maid, fell monster from the hills, had never come to curse our land with her inharmonious strains; she that erst drew nigh our walls and snatched the sons of Cadmus away in her taloned feet to the pathless fields of light, a fiend sent by Hades from hell to plague the men of Thebes; once more unhappy strife is bursting out between the sons of Oedipus in city and home. For never can wrong be right, nor children of unnatural parentage come as a glory to the mother that bears them, but as a stain on the marriage of him who is father and brother at once.

O earth, thou once didst bear—so long ago I heard the story told by foreigners in my own home—a race which sprang of the teeth of a snake with blood-red crest, that fed on beasts, to be the glory and reproach of Thebes.

In days gone by the sons of heaven came to the wedding of Harmonia, and the walls of Thebes arose to the sound of the lyre and her towers stood up as Amphion played, in the midst between the double streams of Dirce, that watereth the green meadows fronting the Ismenus; and Io, our horned ancestress, was mother of the kings of Thebes; thus our city through an endless succession of divers blessings has set herself upon the highest pinnacle of martial glory.

Enter Teiresias and Menoeceus.

Teiresias. (*Led by his daughter*) Lead on, my daughter, for thou art as an eye to my blind feet, as certain as a star to mariners; lead my steps on to level ground, then go before, that we stumble not, for thy father has no strength; keep safe for me in thy maiden hand the auguries I took in the days I observed the flight and cries of birds seated in my holy prophet's chair. Tell me, young Menoeceus, son of Creon, how much further toward the city is it ere I reach thy father? for my knees grow weary, and I can scarce keep up this hurried pace.

Cr. Take heart, Teiresias, for thou hast reached thy moorings and art near thy friends; take him by the hand, my child; for just as every carriage has to wait for outside help to steady it, so too hath the step of age.

Te. Enough; I have arrived; why, Creon, dost thou summon me so urgently?

Cr. I have not forgotten that; but first collect thyself and regain breath, shaking off the fatigue of thy journey.

Te. I am indeed worn out, having arrived here only yesterday from the court of the Erechthidae; for they too were at war, fighting with Eumolpus, in which contest I insured the victory of Cecrops' sons; and I received the golden crown, which thou seest me wearing, as firstfruits of the enemy's spoil.

Cr. I take thy crown of victory as an omen. We, as thou knowest, are exposed to the billows of an Argive war, and great is the struggle for Thebes. Eteocles, our king, is already gone in full harness to meet Mycenae's champions, and hath bidden me inquire of thee our best course to save the city.

Te. For Eteocles I would have closed my lips and refrained from all response, but to thee I will speak, since 'tis thy wish to learn. This country, Creon, has been long afflicted, ever since Laius became a father in heaven's despite, begetting hapless Oedipus to be his own mother's husband. That bloody outrage on his eyes was planned by heaven as an example to Hellas; and the sons of Oedipus made a gross mistake in wishing to throw over it the veil of time, as if forsooth they could outrun the gods' decree; for by robbing their father of his due honour and allowing him no freedom, they exasperated the poor sufferer; so he, stung by suffering and disgrace as well, vented awful curses against them; and I, because I left nothing undone or unsaid to prevent this, incurred the hatred of the sons of Oedipus. But death inflicted by each other's hand awaits them, Creon; and the many heaps of slain, some from Argive, some from Theban missiles, shall cause bitter lamentation in the land of Thebes. Alas! for thee,

poor city thou art being involved in their ruin unless I can persuade one man The best course was to prevent any child of Œdipus becoming either citizen or king in this land on the ground that they were under a ban and would overthrow the city But since evil has the mastery of good there is still one other way of safety but this it were unsafe for me to tell and painful too for those whose high fortune it is to supply their city with the saving cure Farewell! I will away amongst the rest must I endure my doom if need be for what will become of me?

Cr Stay here old man

Te Hold me not

Cr Abide why dost thou seek to fly?

Te Tis thy fortune that flies thee not I

Cr Tell me what can save Thebes and her citizens

Te Though this be *now thy wish it will soon* cease to be

Cr Not wish to save my country? how can that be?

Te Art thou still eager to *be told?*

Cr Yea for wherein should I show *greater zeal?*

Te Then straightway *shalt* thou hear my words prophetic But first I would fain know for certain where Menœceus is who led me hither

Cr Here not far away but at thy side

Te Let him retire far from my prophetic voice

Cr He is my own son and will preserve due silence.

Te Wilt thou then that I tell thee in his presence?

Cr Yea for he will rejoice to hear the means of safety

Te Then hear the purport of my oracle the which if ye observe ye shall save the city of Cadmus

Thou must sacrifice Menœceus thy son here for thy country since thine own lips demand the voice of fate

Cr What mean st thou? what is this thou hast said old man?

Te To that which is to be thou also must conform

*Cr O the eternity of woe thy minute s tale pro*claims!

*Te Yes to thee but to thy country great salva*tion

Cr I shut my ears I never listened to city now farewell!

Te Ha! the man is changed he is drawing back

Cr Go in peace it is not thy prophecy I need

Te Is truth dead because thou art curst with woe?

Cr By thy knees and honoured locks I implore thee!

Te Why implore me? thou art craving a calamity hard to guard against

Cr Keep silence tell not the city thy news

Te Thou biddest me act unjustly I will not hold my peace

Cr What wilt thou then do to me? slay my child?

Te That is for others to decide I have but to speak

Cr Whence came this curse on me and my son?

Te Thou dost right to ask me and to test what I have said In yonder lair where the earth born dragon kept watch and ward o er Dirce s springs, *must this youth be offered and shed his life blood on the ground by reason of Ares* ancient grudge against Cadmus who thus avenges the slaughter of his earth born snake If ye do this ye shall win Ares as an ally and if the earth receive crop for crop and *human blood for blood* ye shall find her kind again that erst to your sorrow reared from that dragon s seed a crop of warriors with golden casques for *needs must one sprung from the dragon s teeth be slain Now thou art our only survivor of the seed of* that sown race whose lineage is pure alike on mother s and on father s side thou and these thy sons. Hæmon s *marriage debars him from being the vic*tim *for he is no longer single for even if he have* not consummated his marriage yet is he betrothed but this tender youth consecrated to the city s service might by dying rescue his country and bitter will he make the return of Adrastus and his Argives, *flinging o er their eyes death s dark pall, and will* glorify Thebes Choose thee one of these alternatives either save the city or thy son

Now hast thou all I have to say *Daughter* lead me home *A fool the man who practises the* diviner s art for if he should announce an adverse answer he makes himself disliked by those who seek to him while if from pity he deceives those who are consulting him *he sins against Heaven* Phœbus should have been man s *only prophet for he fears no man*

Exit TEIRESIAS

Ch Why so silent Creon why are thy lips hushed and dumb? I too am no less stricken with dismay

Cr Why what could one say? 'Tis clear what my words must be For I will never *plunge myself so* deeply into misfortune as to devote my son to death for the city for love of children binds all men to life and none would resign his own son to die Let no man praise me into slaying my children I am ready to die myself—for I am ripe in years—to set *my country free But thou my son ere* the whole city learn this up and fly with all haste away from *this land regardless of these prophets unbridled* utterances for he will go to the seven gates and the captains there and tell all this to our governors and leaders now if we can forestal him thou mayst be saved but if thou art too late tis all over with us and thou wilt die

Menœceus Whither can I fly? to what city? to which of our guest friends?

Cr Fly where thou wilt be furthest removed from this land

Men 'Tis for thee to name a place for me to carry out thy bidding

Cr After passing Delphi—

Men Whither must I go father?

Cr To Ætolia

Men Whither thence?

Cr To the land of Thesprotia

Men To Dodona s hallowed threshold?

Cr Thou followest me

Men What protection shall I find me there?

Cr The god will send thee on th way

Men How shall I find the means

Cr I ill supply thee w th money

Men A good plan of thine father So go for I will to thy sister Jocasta at whose b east I was suck ed as a babe when reft of my moth r and left a lon ly rphan, to gi e her kindly g eeti g and then will I se k my saf ty Com come! be going that there be o hindrance n thy part

Exit CREON

How el e ly lad es, I banished my father s fears b crafty wo ds to ga n m e d f r he is try ng to con ey me hence depriv ng the cit of its chance and surrendering m to cow a I e Though an old man may be pard ned yet in my case there is no excuse fo betraying the cou try that gave me birth So I will go and save the c ty be assured the eof and gi e my l fe up for this land Fo this were shame that th y whom no oracles bind and who ha not come und r F t s iron law hould stand ther shoulder t shoulder with never a fear f death, and fight for their country befor her t we s, hil I escape the ki gdom like a coward a tr tor t my father and b oth r and cit and wh tesoe er I live I shall appear dasta d Nay by Zeus nd ll his stars, by Ares, god of b ood who stablish d the w trio top that sprung o e day f om ea th a princes of this land that hall not bel b t g I will and tand g n the t pmost battlements will deal my wn death bl w o r the dragon s deep dark den, the spot the seer described and will set my country free I ha e spoken N w I go to make th city a p esent of my lif no mean offeri g to rid this kingdom of t afflict o Fo if each er to take and expend all the good w thi his power con tr but it to his country weal our st tes would experience few troubles and would for the futu e prosper

Exit MENOECEUS

Ch Thou cam t O ged fi nd spawn of earth a d h llish vipe b ood t p pon the sons of Cadmus, rife w th death d fraught w th sorrow half a monster half a maid a m derou prod gy th rov ng w gs nd ra g laws, that in d ys gone by did t catch up y uthful ctims from the ha nts of Dirce w th disc dant n t b nging a deadly curse a woe of bloodshed to our nati land A m de ous god h was wh brought all th t pass, In ry house wa heard ry of m th rs wa ling nd I waili g maids, lame tation a d th voice of eeping a each took up th hant f death from s eet to street m t Loud rang th mou ner wail, and one great ry went p wh ne r that ged maiden bor some vict m out of sight from the city At last cam Œdipus, th man f sorrow o hi mis n from Delphi to thi land of Thebes, a t t them then b t f rward cause of grief for wh n he had ead th riddle triumphantly he formed th his mother an unhallowed union woe to him! polluting th c ty nd by hi curses, l k less ght h plu ed his sons to a guilty strife cau g them to wade th ough seas of blood.

All reverence do we feel for him who is gone to hi death in his country s cause bequeathing to Creon a l gacy of tears but destined to crown with ictory our se e fenced towers. May our m ther hood be blessed with such noble sons, O Pallas k ndly queen who w th well a med stone did t spill the serpent blood rousing Cadmus as thou d dst to brood upon the task whereof the issue was a de mon s curse that swooped upon this land and har ried it

Enter MESSENGER

1st Messenger Ho there! who is at the palace gates? Open the door summon Jocasta forth Ho the el once aga n I call spite of th s long delay come f rth hearken, n ble wife of Œdipus cease thy lam entati n and thy tears of woe

Enter JOCASTA

Jo S re! thou art n t come my friend with the sad news of Eteocles death beside whose shield thou hast ev r ma ched wa ding from h m the foeman s darts? What tid ngs art thou here to bring me? Is my son alive or dead? Declare that to me

1st Mes To rid thee of thy fear at once he li es that terror banish

Jo Next how is it with the seven towers that wall us n?

1st M They stand unshattered still the city is not yet a p

Jo H e they been n jeopardy of the Argive spear?

1st M s Aye n the very brink but our Theban warrio s pro ed too strong for Mycenæ s might

Jo O e th ng t ll me I impl re knowest thou a ght f P l nices, is he yet ali e? for this too I long to learn.

1st Mes As yet thy sons are li ing the pair of them

J God bless thee! How did you succeed in be t ng ff fr m our gates the Argi e host when thus beleaguered? Tell me that I may go with n and cheer th old l l nd man since our city is still safe

1st M s After Creon s son who ga e up life for country had taken his stand on the tu et top and plunged a sword dark hilted through his throat to sa e this land, thy son told off seven companies with their capta ns to th seven gates to keep watch on the Argive warriors, and stationed ca alry to cover ca alry and nfantry to support infantry that as sista e might be close at hand for any weak point n the walls. Then from our loft towers we saw the Argi e host with their wh te shields leaving Teu messus, and when near the t n h th y harged up t our Theban ty at the double I one loud burst from their ranks nd from our battlements r ng out the battle-cry and trumpet-call First to the Neist ian gat Parthe opæus, son of the huntress maid led a ompany bristling w th serried shields, him self w th his o n peculiar bad e i th centre of his targ Atalanta slaying the Ætolian boa with an ar ow hot from far T th gates of Prœtus came the pr ph t Amphiaraus, bringing the ct ms on a har t no vaunting blazo he carried but weapons

chastely plain Next prince Hippomedon came marching to the Ogygian port with this device upon his boss Argus the all seeing with his spangled eyes upon the watch whereof some open with the rising stars while others he closes when they set as one could see after he was slain At the Homoloian gates Tydeus was posting himself a lion s skin with shaggy mane upon his buckler while in his right hand he *bore a torch like Titan Prometheus* to fire the town Thy own son Polynices led the battle gainst the Fountain gate upon his shield for blazon were the steeds of Potniæ galloping at frantic speed revolving by some clever contrivance on pivots inside the buckler close to the handle so as to appear distraught At Electra s gate famed Capaneus brought up his company bold as Ares for the fray this device his buckler bore upon its iron back an earth born giant carrying on his shoulders a whole city which he had wrenched from its base a hint to us of the fate *in store for Thebes Adrastus was stationed* at the seventh gate a hundred vipers filled his shield with graven work as he bore on his left arm that proud Argive badge the hydra and serpents were carrying off in their jaws the sons of Thebes from within their very walls Now I was enabled to see each of them as I carried the watch word along the line to the leaders of our companies To begin with we fought with bows and thonged javelins with slings that shoot from far and showers of crashing stones and as we were conquering Tydeus and thy son on a sudden cried aloud Ye sons of Argos before being riddled by their fire why delay to fall upon the gates with might and main the whole of you light armed and horse and charioteers? No loitering then soon as they heard that call and many a warrior fell with bloody crown and not a few of us thou couldst have seen thrown to the earth like tumblers before the walls after they had given up the ghost bedewing the thirsty ground with streams of gore Then Atalanta s son who was not an Argive but an Arcadian hurling himself like a hurricane at the gates called for fire and picks to *raze the town but Periclymenus son of the ocean* god stayed his wild career heaving on his head a waggon load of stone even the coping torn from the battlements and it shattered his head with the hair and crashed through the sutures of the skull dabbling with blood his cheek just showing manhood s flush and never shall he go back alive to his fair archer mother the maid of Mænalus

Thy son then seeing these gates secure went on to the next and I with him There I saw Tydeus and his serried ranks of targeteers hurling their Ætolian spears into the opening at the top of the turrets with such good aim that our men *fled* and left the beetling battlements but thy son rallied them once more as a huntsman cheers his hounds and made them man the towers again And then away we hastened to other gates after stopping the panic there As for the madness of Capaneus how am I to describe it? There was he carrying with him a long scaling ladder and loudly boasting that even the awful lightning of Zeus would not stay him from giving the city to utter destruction and even as he spoke he crept up beneath the hail of stones, gathered under the shelter of his shield mounting from rung to rung on the smooth ladder but just as he was scaling the parapet of the wall Zeus smote him with a thunderbolt loud the earth re-echoed and fear seized every heart for his limbs were hurled from the ladder far apart as from a sling his head toward the sky his blood toward earth while his legs and arms went spinning round like Ixion s wheel, till his charred corpse fell to the ground But when Adrastus saw that Zeus was leagued against his army he drew the Argive troops outside the trench and halted them Meantime our horse marking the lucky omen of Zeus began driving forth their chariots and our men at arms charged into the thick of the Argives and everything combined to their discomfiture men were falling and hurled headlong *from chariots wheels flew off axles crashed together* while ever higher grew the heaps of slain so for today at least have we prevented the destruction of our country s bulwarks but whether fortune will hereafter smile upon this land that rests with Heaven for even as it is it owes its safety to some deity

Ch Victory is fair and if the gods are grown kinder it would be well with me

Jo Heaven and fortune smile for my sons are yet alive and my country hath escaped ruin But Creon seems to have reaped the bitter fruit of my marriage with Œdipus by losing his son to his sorrow a piece of luck for Thebes but bitter grief to him Prithee to thy tale again and say what my two sons intend to do next

1st Mes Forbear to question further all is well with thee so far

Jo Thy words but rouse my suspicions I cannot leave it thus.

1st Mes Hast thou any further wish than thy sons safety?

Jo Yea I would learn whether in the sequel I am also blest

1st Mes Let me go thy son is left without his squire

Jo There is some evil thou art hiding veiling it in darkness

1st Mes Maybe I would not add ill news to the good thou hast heard

Jo Thou must unless thou take wings and fly away

1st Mes Ah! why didst thou not let me go after announcing my good news instead of forcing me to disclose evil? Those two sons of thine are resolved on deeds of shameful recklessness a single combat apart from the host addressing to Argives and Thebans alike words *I would they had never uttered* Eteocles taking his stand on a lofty tower after ordering silence to be proclaimed to the army began on this wise Ye captains of Hellas chieftains of Argos here assembled and ye folk of Cadmus barter not your lives for Polynices or for me! For I myself excuse you from this risk and will engage my brother in single combat and if I slay him I

will possess my palace without trial; but if I am worsted I will bequeath the city to him. Ye men of Argos, give up the struggle and return to your land nor lose your lives here; of the earth-sown folk as well there are dead enough in those already slain."

So he; then thy son Polynices rushed from the array and assented to his proposal; and all the Argives and the people of Cadmus shouted their approval, as though they deemed it just. On these terms the armies made a truce, and in the space between them took an oath each other for their leaders to abide by. Forthwith in brazen mail those two sons of aged Œdipus were casing themselves; and lords of Thebes with friendly care equipped the *captain of this land*, while Argive chieftains armed the other. There they stood in dazzling sheen neither blenching, all eagerness to hurl their lances each at the other. Then came their friends to their side, first one, then another, with words of encouragement, to wit:

"Polynices, it rests with thee to set up an image of Zeus as a trophy and crown Argos with fair renown."

Others hailed Eteocles: "Now art thou fighting for thy city; now, if victorious, thou hast the sceptre in thy power."

So spake they, cheering them to the fray.

Meantime the seers were sacrificing sheep and noting the tongues and forks of fire, the damp reek which is a bad omen, and the tapering flame which gives decisions on two points, being both a sign of victory and defeat. But, if thou hast any power or *subtle speech or charmèd spell, go, stay thy children from this fell affray*, for great is the risk they run. The issue thereof will be grievous sorrow for thee, if to-day thou art reft of both thy sons.

Exit MESSENGER

Jo. Antigone, my daughter, come forth before the *palace; this heaven-sent crisis is no time for thee to* be dancing or amusing thyself with girlish pursuits. But thou and thy mother must prevent two gallant youths, thy own brothers, from plunging into death and falling by each other's hand.

Enter ANTIGONE.

An. Mother mine, what new terror art thou proclaiming to thy dear ones before the palace?

Jo. Daughter, thy brothers are in danger of their life.

An. What mean'st thou?

Jo. They have resolved on single combat.

An. Oh horror! what hast thou to tell, mother?

Jo. No welcome news; follow me.

An. Whither away from my maiden bower?

Jo. To the army.

An. I cannot face the crowd.

Jo. Coyness is not thy cue now.

An. But what can I do?

Jo. Thou shalt end thy brothers' strife.

An. By what means, mother mine?

Jo. By falling at their knees with me.

An. Lead on till we are 'twixt the armies; no time for lingering now.

Jo. Haste, my daughter, haste! For if I can forestall the onset of my sons, I may yet live; but if they be dead, I will lay me down and die with them.

Exeunt JOCASTA *and* ANTIGONE

Ch. Ah me! my bosom thrills with terror; and through my flesh there passed a throb of pity for the hapless mother. Which of her two sons will send the other to a bloody grave? ah! woe is me! O Zeus, O earth, alas! brother severing brother's throat and robbing him of life, cleaving through his shield to spill his blood? Ah me! ah me! which of them will claim my dirge of death? Woe unto thee, thou land of Thebes! two savage beasts, two murderous souls, with brandished spears will soon be draining each his fallen foeman's gore. Woe is them, that they ever thought of single combat! in foreign accent will I chant a dirge of tears and wailing in mourning for the dead. Close to murder stands their fortune; the coming day will decide it. Fatal, ah! fatal will this slaughter be because of the avenging fiend.

But hist! I see Creon on his way hither to the palace with brow o'ercast; I will check my present lamentations.

Enter CREON *with body of* MENŒCEUS

Cr. Ah me! what shall I do? Am I to mourn with bitter tears myself or my city, round which is settling a swarm thick enough to send us to Acheron? My own son hath died for his country, bringing glory to his name but grievous woe to me. His body I rescued but now from the dragon's rocky lair and sadly carried the self-slain victim hither in my arms; and my house is filled with weeping; but now I come *to fetch my sister Jocasta, age seeking age, that she* may bathe my child's corpse and lay it out. For the living must reverence the nether god by paying honour to the dead.

Ch. Thy sister, Creon, hath gone forth and her daughter Antigone went with her.

Cr. Whither went she? and wherefore? tell me.

Ch. She heard that her sons were about to engage *in single combat for the royal house.*

Cr. What is this? I was paying the last honours to my dead son, and so am behindhand in learning this fresh sorrow.

Ch. 'Tis some time, Creon, since thy sister's departure, and I expect the struggle for life and death is already decided by the sons of Œdipus.

Cr. Alas! I see an omen there, the gloomy look and clouded brow of yonder messenger coming to tell us the whole matter.

Enter 2ND MESSENGER.

2nd Messenger. Ah! woe is me! what language can I find to tell my tale?

Cr. Our fate is sealed; thy opening words do naught to reassure us.

2nd Mes. Ah! woe is me! I do repeat; for beside the scenes of woe already enacted I bring tidings of new horror.

Cr. What is thy tale?

2nd Mes. Thy sister's sons are now no more, Creon.

Cr. Alas! thou hast a heavy tale of woe for me and Thebes!

Ch O house of Œdipus hast thou heard these tidings?

Cr Of sons slain by the self same fate

Ch A tale to make it weep were it endowed with sense

Cr Oh! most grievous stroke of fate! woe is me for my sorrows! woe!

2nd Mes Woe indeed! didst thou but know the sorrows still to tell

Cr How can they be more hard to bear than these?

2nd Mes With her two sons thy sister has sought her death

Ch Loudly loudly raise the wail and with white hands smite upon your heads!

Cr Ah! woe is thee Jocasta! what an end to life and marriage hast thou found the riddling of the Sphinx! But tell me how her two sons wrought the bloody deed the struggle caused by the curse of Œdipus

2nd Mes Of our successes before the towers thou knowest for the walls are not so far away as to prevent thy learning each event as it occurred Now when they the sons of aged Œdipus had donned their brazen mail they went and took their stand betwixt the hosts chieftains both and generals too *to decide the day by single combat Then Polynices* turning his eyes towards Argos lifted up a prayer O Hera awful queen—for thy servant I am since I have wedded the daughter of Adrastus and dwell in his land—grant that I may slay my brother and *stain my lifted hand with the blood of my conquered* foe A shameful prize it is I ask my own brother s blood And to many an eye the tear would rise at their sad fate and men looked at one another casting their glances round

*But Eteocles looking towards the temple of Pal*las with the golden shield prayed thus Daughter of Zeus grant that this right arm may launch the spear of victory against my brother s breast and slay him who hath come to sack my country Soon as *the Tuscan trumpet blew the signal for the bloody* fray like the torch that falls[1] they darted wildly at one another and like boars whetting their savage tusks began the fray their beards wet with foam and they kept shooting out their spears but each couched beneath his shield to let the steel glance idly off but if either saw the other s face above the rim he would aim his lance thereat eager to outwit him

But both kept such careful outlook through the spy holes in their shields that their weapons found naught to do while from the on lookers far more than the combatants trickled the sweat caused by terror for their friends Suddenly Eteocles in kicking aside a stone that rolled beneath his tread exposed a limb outside his shield and Polynices seeing a chance of dealing him a blow aimed a dart at it and the Argive shaft went through his leg whereat the Danai one and all cried out for joy But the wounded man seeing a shoulder unguarded in this effort plunged his spear with all his might into the breast of Polynices restoring gladness to the citizens of Thebes though he brake off the spear head and so at a loss for a weapon he retreated foot by foot till catching up a splintered rock he let it fly and shivered the other s spear and now was the combat equal for each had lost his lance Then clutching their sword hilts they closed and round and round with shields close locked they waged their wild warfare Anon Eteocles introduced that crafty Thessalian trick having some knowledge thereof from his intercourse with that country disengaging himself from the immediate contest he drew back his left foot but kept his eye closely on the pit of the other s stomach from a distance then advancing his right foot he plunged his weapon through his navel and fixed it in his spine Down falls Polynices blood bespattered ribs and belly contracting in his agony But that other thinking his victory now complete threw down his sword and set to spoiling him wholly intent thereon without a thought for himself And this indeed was his ruin for Polynices who had fallen first was still faintly breathing and having in his grievous fall retained *his sword he made a last effort and drove it through* the heart of Eteocles There they lie fallen side by side biting the dust with their teeth without having decided the mastery

Ch Ah woe is thee! Œdipus for thy sorrows! *how I pity thee! Heaven it seems has fulfilled those curses of thine*

2nd Mes Now hear what further woes succeeded Just as her two sons had fallen and lay dying *comes their wretched mother on the scene her daughter with her in hot haste and when she* saw their mortal wounds Too late she moaned my sons the help I bring and throwing herself on each in turn she wept and wailed sorrowing o er all her toil in suckling them and so too their sister who *was with her* Supporters of your mother s age! dear brothers leaving me forlorn unwed! Then prince Eteocles with one deep dying gasp hearing his mother s cry laid on her his clammy hand and though he could not say a word his moistened eye was eloquent to prove his love But Polynices was still alive and seeing his *sister* and his aged mother he said Mother mine our end is come I pity thee and my sister Antigone and my dead brother For I loved him though he turned my foe I loved him yes! in spite of all Bury me mother mine and thou my sister dear in my native soil pacify the city s wrath that I may get at least that much of my own fatherland although I lose my home With thy hand mother close mine eyes (therewith he himself places her fingers on the lids) and fare ye well for already the darkness *wraps me round*

So both at once breathed out their life of sorrow But when their mother saw this sad mischance in her o ermastering grief she snatched from a corpse its sword and wrought an awful *deed* driving the *steel right through her throat* and there she lies,

[1] This was the signal for the start at the Lampadephoria an Athenian ceremony at the festivals of the fire gods Prometheus *Hephæstus and Athena*

dead with the dead she lo ed so well, her arms thrown round them both.

Th reon the host sprang to their feet and fell to wrangling we maintaining that victory rested w th my master they with theirs a d am d our leaders the contention raged some holdin that Polynices ga e the first wound with his spear others that as both were dead v ctory rested with neither Mean time Ant gon crept away from the host and th se thers rushed to their weapons, but by some lucky fo thought the folk f Cadmus had sat down under arms and by a sudden attack we surp ised the Ar g e host before it was f lly equipped Not one with stood our onset, and th y filled the plain with fugi ti es, while blood was streaming fr m the countless dead our spears had lain. Soo as ctory crow ed our warfare, some began to rear an image to Zeus for th foe s defeat others we e str pping the Argi e dead of their sh lds a d sendin their spoils inside the battlements and oth rs with Antigone are brin ing her dead brothers h ther for their friend to mourn. So the result of this struggl to ur city hovers between the two extremes of good and evil fortune.

Exit MESSENGER.

Ch. N longer do the misf rtunes of this house extend to hearsay only three c rpses f the slain lie here at the palace for all t see, who by ne com mon death have passed t their life f gloom.

Enter ANTIGONE.

An. No veil I draw o er my tende cheek shaded with its clustering curls no sham I feel from ma den modesty at the h t blood mantling neath my eyes, the blush pon my face, as I hurry wildly on in death tra n casting from my hair its tire and let ting my d licat robe of saff n hue fly loose a tear ful escort to the dead Ah me!

Woe t thee P lynices! rightly named I trow oe to thee, Thebes! o mere strife to nd in strife was thine but murder ompleted by murder hath brought th house f Œd pus t ruin with blood hed dire nd grim O my home my home! what minstrel ca I summon from the dead to chant a fitting d g o er my tearful fate as I bear these th ee orpses f my kin, my m the and he sons, welcome sight to th a e g ng fiend that destroyed th house f Œd pus, root nd bra h in the ho that h h wd sol ed th Sphinx riddl ng h me and slew that sa g songstress. Woe is m ! m father! what ther Hellen or ba ba ia what n bl soul mo g the byg e tribes of ma s poor mortal ra ever nd ed the anguish of such visible fflictions?

Ah! poor ma d how piteous is thy pla nt! What bird from its ert mid th leafy oak or soaring pine tree bra h will come t mourn w th m the maid left motherless, with ries of woe lamenting er t comes, the piteous lon ly life that he cef rth must be always mi with tears that ever st eam? On whi h f these corpses shall I th ow my off rings first plucking th hair from my head? on the b east of the mother that suckled me, or bes de th ghastly death wounds of my broth ers corpses? Woe to thee Œd pus, my a ed sire with sightless orbs, lea e thy roof disclose the misery of thy life thou that drag gest out a weary existence within the house, ha ing cast a mist of darkness o er thine eyes. Dost hear thou whose aged step now gropes its way across the court now seeks repose on wretched pallet couch?

Enter ŒDIPUS

Œdipus Why dau hter hast thou dragged me to the light supporting my blind footsteps from the gloom of my chamber where I lie upon my bed and make piteous moan a hoary sufferer invis ble as a phantom of the air or as a spirit from the pit or as a dream that flies?

A Father there are tidings of sorrow for thee to bear no more thy sons behold the light or thy wife who e er would toil to tend thy blind footsteps as with a staff Alas for thee my sire!

Œ Ah me, the sorrows I endure! I may well say that Tell me child what fate o ertook those three, and how they left the light

An Not to rep oach r mock thee say I this, but in all sadness tis thy own avenging curse with all its load of slaughter fire and ruthless war that is fallen on thy sons. Alas for thee, my sire!

Œ Ah me!

An Why that groan?

Œ 'Tis f r my sons.

An Couldst thou have looked towards yon sun god s four horsed car and turned the light of thine eyes on these corpses, it would ha e been agony to thee.

Œ 'Tis clear enough how their evil fate o ertook my sons but she my poor wife—oh! tell me, daugh ter how she came to die.

An. All saw her weep and heard her moan, as she rushed forth to carry to her sons her la t appeal, a mother s b east. But the mother f und her sons at the Electran gate, in a meadow where the l tus blooms, fighting out their duel like lions in th ir lair eager to wound each other with spears, their blood already congealed a murderous libat on to th Death god poured out by A es. Th n, snatchi g fr m a c rpse a sw d of hamme ed b onze she plunged it in her flesh nd in sorrow for he sons fell w th her arms round them So to-day father the god whoso er this issue is, has gathered to a head the sum f suffering fo our house

Ch To-day is the beginn ng of many troubles to the house f Œdipus may he live to be more for tunate!

Cr Cease now y ur lamentations tis time w be thou ht us of their burial. Hear what I have to say Œd pus. Eteocles, thy son, l ft me to rule this land by assigning t as a marriage portion to Hæmon with the hand of thy daughter Antigone Wh fo e I will no l er permit thee to dwell therein, fo Teiresias plainly decla ed that the city would ne er p osper so long as thou wert in the land So begone! And this I say not to flout th e, nor because I bear thee any grudge, but from fear that some

calamity will come upon the realm by reason of those fiends that dog thy steps

Œ O destiny! to what a life of pain and sorrow didst thou bear me beyond all men that ever were, e'en from the very first yea for when I was yet unborn or ever I had left my mother's womb and seen the light Apollo foretold to Laius that I should become my father's murderer woe is me! So as soon as I was born my father tried to end again the hapless life he had given deeming me his foe for it was fated he should die at my hand so he sent me still unweaned to make a pitiful meal for beasts but I escaped from that Ah! would that Cithæron had sunk into hell's yawning abyss in that it slew me not! Instead thereof Fate made me a slave in the service of Polybus and I poor wretch after slaying my own father came to wed my mother to her sorrow and begat sons that were my brothers whom also I have destroyed by bequeathing unto them the legacy of curses I received from Laius For nature did not make me so void of understanding that I should have devised these horrors against my own eyes and my children's life without the intervention of some god Let that pass What am I poor wretch to do? Who now will be my guide and tend the blind man's step? Shall she that is dead? Were she alive I know right well she would My pair of gallant sons then? But they are gone from me Am I still so young myself that I can find a livelihood? Whence could I? O Creon why seek thus to slay me utterly? For so thou wilt if thou banish me from the land Yet will I never twine my arms about thy knees and betray cowardice for I will not belie my former gallant soul no! not for all my evil case

Cr Thy words are brave in refusing to touch my knees and I am equally resolved not to let thee abide in the land For these dead bear one forthwith to the palace but the other who came with stranger folk to sack his native town the dead Polynices cast forth unburied beyond our frontiers To all the race of Cadmus shall this be proclaimed that whoso e'er is caught decking his corpse with wreaths or giving it burial shall be requited with death unwept unburied let him lie a prey to birds As for thee Antigone leave thy mourning for these lifeless three and betake thyself indoors to abide there in maiden state until to morrow when Hæmon waits to wed thee

An O father in what cruel misery are we plunged! For thee I mourn more than for the dead for in thy woes there is no opposite to trouble but universal sorrow is thy lot As for thee thou new made king why I ask dost thou mock my father thus with banishment? why start making laws over a helpless corpse?

Cr This was what Eteocles, not I resolved

An A foolish thought and foolish art thou for entertaining it!

Cr What! ought I not to carry out his behests?

An No not if they are wrong and ill advised

Cr Why is it not just for that other to be given to the dogs?

An Nay the vengeance ye are exacting is no lawful one

Cr It is for he was his country's foe, though not a foeman born

An Well to fate he rendered up his destinies.

Cr Let him now pay forfeit in his burial too.

An What crime did he commit in coming to claim his heritage?

Cr Be very sure of this yon man shall have no burial

An I will bury him although the state forbids.

Cr Do so and thou wilt be making thy own grave by his

An A noble end for two so near and dear to be laid side by side!

Cr (*To his servants*) Ho! seize and bear her within the palace

An Never! for I will not loose my hold upon this corpse

Cr Heaven's decrees girl fit not thy fancies.

An Decrees! here is another No insult to the dead

Cr Be sure that none shall sprinkle over this corpse the moistened dust

An O Creon by my mother's corpse by Jocasta I implore thee!

Cr Tis but lost labour thou wilt not gain thy prayer

An Let me but bathe the dead body—

Cr Nay that would be part of what the city is forbidden

An At least let me bandage the gaping wounds.

Cr No thou shalt never pay honour to this corpse

An O my darling! one kiss at least will I print upon thy lips

Cr Do not let this mourning bring disaster on thy marriage

An Marriage! dost think I will live to wed thy son?

Cr Most certainly thou must how wilt thou escape the match?

An Then if I must our wedding night will find another Danaid bride in me

Cr (*Turning to* ŒDIPUS) Dost witness how boldly she reproached me?

An Witness this steel the sword by which I swear!

Cr Why art so bent on being released from this marriage?

An I mean to share my hapless father's exile.

Cr A noble spirit thine but somewhat touched with folly

An Likewise will I share his death I tell thee further

Cr Go leave the land thou shalt not murder son of mine *Exit* CREON

Œ Daughter for this loyal spirit I thank thee

An Were I to wed then thou my father wouldst be alone in thy exile

Œ Abide here and be happy I will bear my own load of sorrow

An And who shall tend thee in thy blindness, father?

Œ. Where fate appoints, there will I lay me down upon the ground

A. Wher is now the famo s Œd pus, where that famous riddle?

Œ. Lost for ever! one da made and one day marred my fortune.

An. May not I too ha e thy sor ows?

Œ. To wander with her bl nded sire were shame unto his child.

An. Not so, father but glo y rather if she be a maid discreet.

Œ. Lead me nigh that I ma touch thy mother s corpse

An. So! embrace the aged form so dear to thee.

Œ. Woe is thee thy moth rhood thy marriage most unblest!

A A piteous corpse, a prey to every ill at once!

Œ. Where lies the corpse of Eteocles, and of Pol ynices, where?

An Both lie st etched before thee sid by side

Œ. *La* the blind man s hand upon his poor sons brows.

An. There th n! touch the dead th children.

Œ Woe for you! dear fallen sons, sad off pring of a sire as sad!

A O my brother Polynices, name most dear to me!

Œ. Now is the oracle of Loxias bein fulfilled my child.

An Wh t oracle was that? canst tho ha e further woes to tell?

Œ. That I should die n gl rious Athens after a lif of andering

An Wher ? what fenced town n Attica will take thee in

Œ. Hallowed Colonus, home of the god of steed Come th n, attend on thy blind father since thou rt minded t shar his exil

An. T w et hed xile go thy way stretch forth th hand my ged sir taking me to guide the lik a breeze that speedeth barques.

Œ. See daughte I am ad ncing be thou my guid poor hild

A Ah, poo indeed! the saddest maid f all in Thebes.

Œ. Wher am I plantin my ged t p Bring my staff ch ld

An This way this way father mine! plant thy footsteps here like a dream for all the strength thou ha t

Œ Woe unto thee that art driving my aged l mbs in gr evous exile from their land! Ah me! the sor rows endur !

An Endure ! why speak of enduring? Justice regardeth not the sinner and requiteth not men s foll es.

Œ. I am he whose name passed into high songs of victo y becau e I guessed the ma den s baffling riddle

An Thou art b nging up again the reproach of the Sphinx. Talk no mor of past success. Th s misery was in store for thee all the while to become an exile from thy country and di thou knowest not where while I bequeathin to my girlish friends tears of sad regret must go fo th from my native land roaming a no maiden o ht

Ah! this dutiful resolve w ll crown me with glory in respect of my father s sufferings. Woe is me for the insults heaped on thee and on my b other whose dead body is cast forth from the palace unburied poor bo ! I will yet bury him secretly though I ha e to die for it father

Œ. To thy companions show thyself.

A M own laments suffice.

Œ. Go pray then at the altars.

A They are weary of my piteous tale.

Œ. At least go seek the Bromian god in his hal lowed hau t amongst the Mænads hills.

A Off ring homage that is no homage in Heav en s eyes to him in whose ho our I once fringed my dress with the Theban fawn skin and led the dance upon the hills for the holy choir of Sem le?

Œ. My noble f llow-countrymen, behold me I m Œd pus, who sol ed the famous riddle and once was first of men, I who alone cut short the murde us Sphinx s tyranny am now m self expelled the land n shame and misery Go to why make this moan nd bootless lamentat on? Weak mortal a I am I must end re the fate that God dec ees

Exeunt ŒDIPUS *and* ANTIGONE

Ch H il! majesti V ctory! keep thou my life nor e er cease t crown my song! *Exeunt* OMNES

ORESTES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Electra
Helen
Chorus of Argive Maidens
Orestes
Menelaus
Pylades
Messenger
Hermione
A Phrygian Eunuch in Helen's retinue
Apollo
Tyndareus

Before the royal palace at Argos Orestes *lies sleeping on a couch in the background* Electra *is watching him*

Electra There is naught so terrible to describe be it physical pain or heaven sent affliction that man's nature may not have to bear the burden of it Tantalus for instance once so prosperous—and I am not now taunting him with his misfortunes—that Tantalus the reputed son of Zeus hangs suspended in mid air quailing at the crag which looms above his head paying this penalty they say for the shameful weakness he displayed in failing to keep a bridle on his lips when admitted by gods though he was but a mortal to share the honours of their feasts like one of them

He it was that begat Pelops the father of Atreus for whom the goddess when she had carded her wool spun a web of strife even to the making of war with his own brother Thyestes But why need I repeat that hideous tale?

Well Atreus slew Thyestes children and feasted him on them but—passing over intermediate events —from Atreus and Ærope of Crete sprang Agamemnon that famous chief—if his was really fame—and Menelaus Now it was this Menelaus who married Helen Heaven's abhorrence while his brother King Agamemnon took Clytaemnestra to wife name of note in Hellas and we three daughters were his issue Chrysothemis Iphigenia and myself Electra also a son Orestes all of that one accursed mother who slew her lord after snaring him in a robe that had no outlet Her reason a maiden's lips may not declare and so I leave that unexplained for the world to guess at What need for me to charge Phœbus with wrong doing though he instigated Orestes to slay his own mother a deed that few approved still it was his obedience to the god that made him slay her I too feebly as a woman would shared in the deed of blood as did Pylades who helped us to bring it about

After this my poor Orestes fell sick of a cruel wasting disease upon his couch he lies prostrated and it is his mother's blood that goads him into frenzied fits this I say from dread of naming those goddesses whose terrors are chasing him before them —even the Eumenides 'Tis now the sixth day since the body of his murdered mother was committed to the cleansing fire since then no food has passed his lips nor hath he washed his skin but wrapped in his cloak he weeps in his lucid moments whenever the fever leaves him otherwhiles he bounds headlong from his couch as a colt when it is loosed from the yoke Moreover this city of Argos has decreed that no man give us shelter at his fireside or speak to matricides like us yea and this is the fateful da on which Argos will decide our sentence whether we are both to die by stoning or to whet the steel and plunge it in our necks There is 'tis true one hope of escape still left us Menelaus has landed from Troy his fleet now crowds the haven of Nauplia where he is come to anchor returned at last from Troy after ceaseless wanderings but Helen that lady of sorrows as she styles herself hath he sent on to our palace carefully waiting for the night lest any of those parents whose sons were slain beneath the walls of Troy might see her if she went by day and set to stoning her Within she sits, weeping for her sister and the calamities of her family and yet *she* hath still some solace in her woe for Hermione the child she left at home in the hour she sailed for Troy—the maid whom Menelaus brought from Sparta and entrusted to my mother's keepin —is still a cause of joy to her and a reason to forget her sorrows

I meantime am watching each approach against the moment I see Menelaus arriving for unless we find some safety there we have but a feeble anchor to ride on otherwise

A helpless thing an unlucky house!

Enter Helen

Helen Daughter of Clytaemnestra and Agamemnon hapless Electra too long now left a maid unwed! how is it with thee and thy brother this ill starred Orestes who slew his mother! Speak for referring the sin as I do to Phœbus I incur no pollution by letting thee accost me and yet I am truly sorry for the fate of my sister Clytæmnestra on whom I never set eyes after I was driven by heaven sent frenzy to sail on my disastrous voyage to Ilium

be now that I am parted from her I bewail our misfortunes.

El. Prithee, Helen, why should I speak of that which thine own eyes can see the son of Agamemnon in his misery?

Beside his wretched corpse I sit a sleepless sentinel for corpse he is, so faint his breath not that I reproach him with his sufferings but thou art highly blest and thy husband too, and ye are come upon us in th hour of adversity

Hel. How long hath he been laid thus upon his couch?

El. Ever since he spilt his mother s blood

Hel. Unhappy wretch! unhappy mother! what a death she died!

El. L his pr enou h to succumb to his misery

Hel. Prithee, maiden, wilt hear me a moment?

El. Aye, th such small leisure as this watching o er a brother lea es.

Hel. Wilt go for me to my sister s tomb

El. Wouldst ha e me seek my mother s tomb? And why?

Hel. T carry an offering of hair and a libation for me.

El. Art forbidden then to go to the tombs of those thou lovest?

Hel. Na but I am ashamed to show myself in Argos.

El. A late repentance surel for one who left her home so shamefully then.

Hel. Thou hast told the truth, but thy telling is not kind t me

El. What is this s pposed modesty before th eyes of M cenae that possesses thee?

Hel. I am afraid of th fathers of those who lie dead beneath the walls of Ilium.

El. Good cause for fear thy name is on e ery tongue in Argos.

Hel. Then free me f my fear nd grant me this boon.

El. I could n t bear to face m moth r s gra e.

Hel. And et twere shame indeed to send these offerings b serva t s hand.

El. Then h y not send th daught r Hermi ne?

Hel. 'Tis not seeml for tend r maid to make her wa mongst a owd.

El. And et she would thus be repaying her dead foster mother care

Hel. True thou hast con inced me, maiden. Yes, I ll send m dau hter for thou rt right (*Calling*) Hermione, my child come forth bef the Palac (*enter* HERMIONE) tak these libat ons nd these tresses of mine in th hands, and go pour round Cl taem. estra tomb a mi gled cup f honey m lk d f th g w e th n tand upon the heaped up gra nd proclaim therefrom, H len, thy si er sends thee hese libations as her gift, fearing herself t pproa h thy tomb from t rror f the Argi mob and bid her harbour kindly thou hts to d m d th d my hu band t ward these two wretched uffer rs, too, whom Hea en hath afflicted. Likewise promise that I w ll pa in full whate er funeral gifts are due from me to a sister Now go my child and tarry not and soon as thou hast made the off ring at the tomb bethink thee of thy return

Exit HELEN *and* HERMIONE.

El. O human nature what a grievous curse thou art n this world! and what sal ation too, to those who have a goodl herita e therein!

Did ye mark how she cut off her hair only at the ends careful to preserve its beauty? 'Tis the same woman as of old May Hea en s hate pursue thee! for thou ha t pro ed the ruin of me and my poor brother and all Hellas.

Alack! here a e my friends once more coming to unite their plaint ve dirge with mine they will soon put an end to my brother s peaceful sleep and cause my tears to flow when I see his frenzied fit

Enter CHORUS OF ARGIVE MAIDENS.

Good friends, step softly not a sound! not a whisper! for thou h thi kindness is well meant rouse him and I shall rue it

Chorus Hush! hush! let your footsteps fall li ht ly! not a sound! not a whi per!

El. Further further from his couch! I beseech ye

Ch There! there! I obey

El. Hush! hush! good friend I pray Soft as the breath of slender reed pipe be thy e ery accent!

Ch Hark, how soft and low I drop my oice!

El. Yes, lower thy oice e en thus approach now softly soft! T ll me what reason ye had for coming at ll. 'Tis so long since he laid him down to sleep

Ch H is it with him? Impart thy news, dear lad Is it weal o woe I m to tell?

El. H is still ali but his moans grow feeble.

Ch What sayest thou? (*Turning to* ORESTES) Poor wretch!

El. Awake him from the deep sweet slumber he is now e joyin and thou wilt cause his death.

Ch Ah poo sufferer! victim of Heaven s en e ful hate!

El. Ah misery! It seems it was wicked utterance by a wicked god deli ered the day that Loxias from his eat upo the tripod of Themis decreed my mother s most unnatural murder

Ch H urs be eath his robe! Dost see?

El. Alas! I do thy noisy chatter has roused him from his sleep.

Ch N y methinks he slumbers still.

El. B gone! quit the house! retrace thy footsteps! a truce to this din!

Ch He leeps. Thou art right

El. O N ght majestic q een giver of leep to toiling men, rise from th byss of Erebus and wing thy way to the palace of Agamemnon! For beneath our load of misery and woe we sink, aye sink oppressed

There! (*to the* CHORUS) that noise again! Do be stil nd keep that h h [tched oice of thin away from his couch suff r him to enjoy his sleep i peace!

Ch T ll me, what end awaits his troubles?

El Death death what else? for he does not even miss his food

Ch Why then his doom is full in view

El Phœbus marked us out as his victims by imposing a foul unnatural task even the shedding of the blood of our mother who slew our sire

Ch Twas just but twas not well

El Dead dead O mother mine! and thou hast slain a father and these children of thy womb for we are dead or as the dead Yes thou art in thy grave and more than half my life is spent in weeping and wailing and midnight lamentations oh look on me! a maid unwed unblest with babes I drag out a joyless existence as if for ever

Ch My daughter Electra from thy near station there see whether thy brother hath not passed away without thy knowing it for I like not his utter prostration

Orestes (*Awaking refreshed*) Sweet charm of sleep! saviour in sickness! how dear to me thy coming was! how needed! All hail majestic power oblivion of woe! How wise this goddess is how earnestly invoked by every suffering soul! (*Addressing* ELECTRA) Whence came I hither? How is it I am here? for I have lost all previous recollection and remember nothing

El Dearest brother how glad I was to see thee fall asleep! Wouldst have me take thee in my arms and lift thy body?

Or Take oh! take me in thy arms and from this sufferer s mouth and eyes wipe off the flakes of foam

El Ah! tis a service I love nor do I scorn with sister s hand to tend a brother s limbs

Or Prop me up thy side to mine brush the matted hair from off my face for I see but dimly

El Ah poor head! how squalid are thy locks become! How wild they look from remaining so long unwashed!

Or Lay me once more upon the couch when my fit leaves me I am all unnerved unstrung

El (*As she lays him down*) Welcome to the sick man is his couch for painful though it be to take thereto yet is it necessary

Or Set me upright once again turn me round it is their helplessness makes the sick so hard to please

El Wilt put thy feet upon the ground and take a step at last? Change is always pleasant

Or That will I for that has a semblance of health and that seeming though it be far from the reality is preferable to this

El Hear me then O brother mine while yet the avenging fiends permit thee to use thy senses

Or Hast news to tell? so it be good thou dost me a kindness but if it tend to my hurt lo! I have sorrow enough

El Menelaus thy father s brother is arrived in Nauplia his fleet lies at anchor

Or Ha! is he come to cast a ray of light upon our gloom a man of our own kin who owes our sire a debt of gratitude?

El. Yes, he is come and is bringing Helen with him from the walls of Troy accept this as a sure proof of what I say

Or Had he returned alone in safety he were more to be envied for if he is bringing his wife with him he is bringing a load of mischief.

El Tyndareus begat a race of daughters notorious for the shame they earned infamous throughout Hellas.

Or Be thou then different from that evil brood for well thou mayest and that not only in profession but also in heart

El Ah! brother thine eye is growing wild and in a moment art thou passing from thy recent saneness back to frenzy

Or (*Starting up wildly*) Mother I implore thee! let not loose on me those maidens with their bloodshot eyes and snaky hair Ha! see see where they approach to leap upon me!

El Lie still poor sufferer on thy couch thine eye sees none of the things which thy fancy paints so clear

Or O Phœbus! they will kill me yon hounds of hell death s priestesses with glaring eyes, terrific goddesses.

El I will not let thee go but with arms twined round thee will prevent thy piteous tossing to and fro

Or Loose me! thou art one of those fiends that plague me and art gripping me by the waist to hurl my body into Tartarus

El Woe is me! what succour can I find seeing that we have Heaven s forces set against us?

Or Give me my horn tipped bow Apollo s gift wherewith that god declared that I should defend myself against these goddesses if ever they sought to scare me with wild transports of madness.

A mortal hand will wound one of these goddesses, unless she vanish from my sight Do ye not heed me or mark the feathered shaft of my far shooting bow ready to wing its flight? What! do ye linger still? Spread your pinions skim the sky and blame those oracles of Phœbus

Ah! why am I raving panting gasping? Whither oh! whither have I leapt from off my couch? Once more the storm is past I see a calm

Sister why weepest thou thy head wrapped in thy robe? I am ashamed that I should make thee a partner in my sufferings and distress a maid like thee through sickness of mine Cease to fret for my troubles for though thou didst consent to it yet twas I that spilt our mother s blood Tis Loxias I blame for urging me on to do a deed most damned encouraging me with words but no real help for I am sure that had I asked my father to his face whether I was to slay my mother he would have implored me oft and earnestly by this beard never to plunge a murderer s sword into my mother s breast since he would not thereby regain his life whilst I poor wretch should be doomed to drain this cup of sorrow

Even as it is dear sister unveil thy face and cease to weep despite our abject misery and whensoever

then wert me give way to despair be it thine to calm and sooth the terrors and distorted fancies of my brain Likewise when sorrow comes to thee, I must be at thy side and give thee words of comfort for to help our friends like this is a gracious task.

Seek thy chamber now poor sister lie down and close awhile thy sleepless eyes take food and bathe thy body for if thou leave me or fall sick from watching me, my doom is sealed for thou art the only champion I now have, by all the rest deserted, as thou seest.

El. I leave thee! no ever! With thee I am resolved to live and die for 'tis the same if thou die what can I, a woman, do? How shall I escape alone, reft of brother sire, and friend ?

Still if it be thy pleasure I must do thy bidding But lay thee down upon the couch, and pay not too great heed to the terrors and alarms that scare thee from thy rest lie still upon thy pallet bed for even though one be not sick but only fancy it this is a source of weariness and perplexity to mortals.

Exit ELECTRA.

Ch. Ah! ye goddesses terrific swiftly careering on outspread pinions, whose lot it is mid tears and groans to hold revel not with Bacchic rites weavering in sun's swarth hued, that dart along the spacious firmament, exacting a penalty for blood a penalty for murder to you I make my suppliant prayer suffer the son of Agamemnon to forget his wild hurling frenzy!

Ah, woe for the troublous task which thou, poor wretch, didst strive to compass to thy ruin, listening to the voice prophetic proclaimed aloud by Phoebus from the tripod throughout his sanctuary here is a secret spot they call the navel of the earth.

Zeus! What pity will be shown? what deadly struggle is here at hand, hurrying thee on o'er thy path of woe, victim on whom some fiend is heaping tribulation, by bringing on thy house thy mother's bloodshed which drives thee raving mad I weep for thee for thee I weep.

Great prosperity abideth not amongst mankind but some power divine shaking it to and fro like the sail of a swift galley plunges it deep in the waves of grievous affliction, boisterous and deadly as the waves of the sea. For what new family am I henceforth to honour by preference other than that which sprang from a marriage divine even from Tantalus?

Behold a king draws near prince Menelaus! From his magnificence 'tis plain to see that he is a scion of the race of Tantalus.

All hail thou that didst sail with thousand ships to Asia strand, and by Heaven's help accomplish all thy heart's desire, making good fortune a friend to thyself.

Enter MENELAUS.

Menelaus All hail, my home Some joy I feel on seeing thee again on my return from Troy some sorrow too the sight recalls for never yet have I beheld a house more closely encircled by the net of dire affliction.

Concerning Agamemnon's fate and the awful death he died at his wife's hands I learnt as I was trying to put in at Malea when the sailors were from out the waves, unerring Glaucus, Nereus spokesman brought the news to me for he had revealed himself in full view by our ship and thus addressed me "Yonder Menelaus, lies thy brother slain, plunged in a fatal bath, the last his wife will ever give him" filling both the cup of tears for me and my brave crew Arrived at Nauplia my wife already on the point of starting hither I was dreaming of folding Orestes, Agamemnon's son and his mother in a fond embrace as if they were well with them, when I heard a mariner relate the murder of the daughter of Tyndareus. Tell me then good girls, where to find the son of Agamemnon, the daring author of that fearful crime for he was but a babe in Clytaemnestra's arms that day I left my home to go to Troy so that I should not recognize him, even were I to see him.

Or. (*Staggering towards him from the couch*) Behold the object of thy inquiry Menelaus this is Orestes. To thee will I of mine own accord relate my sufferings. But as the prelude to my speech I clasp thy knees in suppliant wise seeking thus to tie to thee the prayer of lips that lack the suppliant's bough save me for thou art arrived at the very crisis of my trouble

Men. Ye gods! what do I see? what death's head greets my sight?

Or. Thou art right I am dead through misery though I still gaze upon the sun

Men. How wild the look thy unkempt hair gives thee poor wretch!

Or. 'Tis not my looks, but my deeds that torture me

Men. How terribly thy tearless eyeballs glare!

Or. My body is vanished and gone though my name hath not yet deserted me

Men. Unsightly apparition, so different from what I expected!

Or. In me behold a man that hath slain his hapless mother

Men. I have heard all be chary of thy tale of woe

Or. I will but the deity is lavish of woe in my case

Men. What ails thee? what is thy deadly sickness

Or. My conscience I know that I am guilty of an awful crime

Men. Explain thyself wisdom is shown in clearness, not in obscurity

Or. 'Tis grief that is my chief complaint

Men. True she is a goddess dire yet are there cures for her

[1]The fillet is to the sacred wreath as worn by suppliants, one end of which they retained, while the other was fastened to the altar thus identifying them with its sanctity

Or Mad transports too and the vengeance due to a mother s blood

Men When did thy fit begin? which day was it?

Or On the day I was heaping the mound o er my poor mother s grave

Men When thou wast in the house or watching by the pyre?

Or As I was waiting by night to gather up her bones

Men Was any one else there to help thee rise?

Or Yes Pylades who shared with me the bloody deed my mother s murder

Men What phantom forms afflict thee thus?

Or Three maidens black as night I seem to see

Men I know of whom thou speakest but I will not name them

Or Do not they are too dread thou wert wise to void naming them

Men Are these the fiends that persecute thee with the curse of kindred blood?

Or Oh! the torment I endure from their hot pursuit!

Men That they who have done an awful deed should be so done by is not strange

Or Ah well! I must have recourse in these troubles—

Men Speak not of dying that were folly

Or To Phœbus by whose command I shed my mother s blood

Men Showing a strange ignorance of what is fair and right

Or We must obey the gods whatever those gods are

Men Spite of all this doth not Loxias help thy affliction?

Or He will in time to wait like this is the way with gods

Men How long is it since thy mother breathed her last?

Or This is now the sixth day her funeral pyre is still warm

Men How soon the goddesses arrived to require thy mother s blood of thee!

Or To cleverness I lay no claim but I was a true friend to friends

Men Does thy father afford thee any help at all?

Or Not as yet and delaying to do so is methinks equivalent to not doing it

Men How dost thou stand towards the city after that deed of thine?

Or So hated am I that I cannot speak to any man

Men Have not thy hands been even cleansed of their blood guiltiness as the law requires?

Or No for where er I go the door is shut against me

Men Which of the citizens drive thee from the land?

Or Œax who refers to my father his reason for hating Troy

Men I understand he is visiting on thee th blood of Palamedes

Or I at least had naught to do with that yet am I utterly o erthrown

Men Who else? some of the friends of Ægisthus perhaps?

Or Yes they insult me and the city listens to them now

Men Will it not suffer thee to keep the sceptre of Agamemnon?

Or How should it? seeing that they will not suffer me to remain alive

Men What is their method? canst thou tell me plainly?

Or To day is sentence to be passed upon me

Men Exile or death or something else?

Or Death by stoning at the hands of the citizens

Men Then why not cross the frontier and fly?

Or Why not? because I am hemmed in by a ring of armed men

Men Private foes or Argive troops?

Or By all the citizens to the end that I may die tis shortly told

Men Poor wretch! thou hast arrived at the extremity of woe

Or In thee I still have hopes of escape from my troubles Yea since fortune smiles upon thy coming impart to thy less favoured friends some of thy prosperity not reserving that luck exclusively for thyself nay take thy turn too at suffering and so pay back my father s kindness to those who have a claim on thee For such friends as desert us in the hour of adversity are friends in name but not in reality

Ch Lo! Tyndareus the Spartan is making his way hither with the step of age clad in black raiment with his hair shorn short in mourning for his daughter

Or Menelaus I am ruined See! Tyndareus approaches the man of all others I most shrink from facing because of the deed I have done for he it was that nursed me when a babe and lavished on me many a fond caress carrying me about in his arms as the son of Agamemnon and so did Leda for they both regarded me as much as the Dioscuri

Ah me! my wretched heart and soul! twas a sorry return I made them What darkness can I find to veil my head? what cloud can I spread before me in my efforts to escape the old man s eye?

Enter TYNDAREUS

Tyndareus Where where may I find Menelaus, my daughter s husband? for as I was pouring libations on Clytaemnestra s grave I heard that he was come to Nauplia with his wife safe home again after many a long year Lead me to him for I would fain stand at his right hand and give him greeting as a friend whom at last I see again

Men Hail reverend father! rival of Zeus for a bride!

Ty All hail to thee! Menelaus kinsman mine! Ha! (*Catching sight of* ORESTES) What an evil it is to be ignorant of the future! There lies that matricide before the house a viper darting venom from

his eyes, whom my soul abhors. What! Menelaus, speaking to a godless wretch like him?

Men. And why not? He is the son of one whom I loved well.

Ty. This his son? this creature here?

Men. Yes, his son; and therefore worthy of respect, albeit in distress.

Ty. Thou hast been so long amongst barbarians that thou art one of them.

Men. Always to respect one's kith and kin is a custom in Hellas.

Ty. Are another custom is to yield willing deference to the laws.

Men. The wise hold that everything which depends on necessity is its slave.

Ty. Keep that wisdom for thyself; I will not admit it.

Men. No, for thou art angry and old age is not wise.

Ty. What could dispute about wisdom have to do with him? If right and wrong are clear to all, who was ever more senseless than this man, seeing that he never weighed the justice of the case nor yet appealed to the universal law of Hellas? For instance, when Agamemnon breathed his last beneath the blow my daughter dealt upon his head—a deed most foul, which I will never defend—he should have brought a charge against his mother and inflicted the penalty allowed by law for bloodshed, banishing her from his house; thus would he have gained credit of forbearance from the calamity, keeping strictly to the law and showing his piety as well. As it is, he is come into the same misfortune as his mother; for though he had just cause for thinking her a wicked woman, he has surpassed her himself by murdering her. I will ask thee, Menelaus, just one question. Take this case: the wife of his bosom has slain him; his son follows suit and kills his mother in revenge; next that son's son to expiate this murder commits another; where, pray, will the chain of horrors end?

Our forefathers settled these matters the right way. They forbade any one with blood upon his hand to appear in their sight or cross their path; "purify him by exile," said they, "but no retaliation!" Otherwise there must always have been one who, by taking the pollution last upon his hands, would be liable to have his own blood shed.

For my part I abhor wicked women, especially my daughter who slew her husband. Helen, too, thy own wife I will never commend; no! I would not even speak to her; and little I envy thee thy voyage to Troy for so worthless a woman. But the law will I defend with all my might, seeking to check this brutal spirit of murder, which is always the ruin of countries and cities alike. (*Turning to* ORESTES) Hadst thou no heart, wretch, when thy mother was baring her breast in her appeal to thee? True, I did not witness that awful deed, yet do my poor old eyes run down with tears. One thing at least attests the truth of what I say: thou art abhorred by Heaven, and thus aimless wandering, these transports of madness and terror are thy atonement for a mother's blood. What need have I of others to testify, where I can see for myself? Take warning therefore, Menelaus; seek not to oppose the gods from any wish to help this wretch, but leave him to be stoned to death by his fellow-citizens, else set not foot on Sparta's soil. My daughter is dead, and she deserved her fate; but it should not have been his hand that slew her. In all except my daughters have I been a happy man; there my fortune stopped.

Ch. His is an enviable lot, who is blest in his children, and does not find himself brought into evil notoriety.

Or. I am afraid to speak before thee, aged prince, in a matter where I am sure to grieve thee to the heart. Only let thy years, which frighten me from speaking, set no barrier in the path of my words, and I will go forward; but as it is, I fear thy grey hairs. My crime is, I slew my mother; yet on another count this is no crime, being vengeance for my father. What ought I to have done? Set one thing against another. My father begat me; thy daughter gave me birth, being the field that received the seed from another; for without a sire no child would ever be born. So I reasoned thus: I ought to stand by the author of my being rather than the woman who undertook to rear me. Now thy daughter—*mother* I blush to call her—was engaged in secret intrigues with a lover (reviling her I shall revile myself; yet speak I will). Ægisthus was that stealthy paramour who lived with her; him I slew, and after him I sacrificed my mother—a crime no doubt, but done to avenge my father. Now as regards the matters for which I deserve to be stoned as thou threatenest, hear the service I am conferring on all Hellas. If women become so bold as to murder their husbands, taking refuge in their children, with the mother's breast to catch their pity, they would think nothing of destroying their husbands on any plea whatsoever. But I, by a horrible crime—such is thy exaggerated phrase—have put an end to this custom. I hated my mother and had good cause to slay her. She was false to her husband when he was gone from his home to fight for all Hellas at the head of its armies, neither did she keep his honour undefiled; and when her sin had found her out, she wreaked no punishment upon herself, but to avoid the vengeance of her lord, visited her sins on my father and slew him. By Heaven! ill time as it is for me to *ment on Heaven*, when defending the cause of murder, still, suppose I had by my silence consented to my mother's conduct, what would the murdered man have done *to me?* Would he not now for very hate be tormenting me with avenging fiends? or are there goddesses to help my mother, and are there none to aid him in his deeper wrong? Thou, yes! thou, old man, hast been my ruin by begetting a daughter so abandoned; for it was owing to her audacious deed that I lost my father and became my mother's murderer.

Attend, I say. Telemachus did not kill the wife of Odysseus; why? because she wedded not a second

husband but the marriage bed remained untainted in her halls Once more Apollo who makes the navel of the earth his home vouchsafing unerring prophecies to man the god whom we obey in all he saith— twas he to whom I hearkened when I slew my mother Find him guilty of the crime slay him his was the sin not mine What ought I to have done? or is not the god competent to expiate the pollution when I refer it to him? Whither should one fly henceforth if he will not rescue me from death after giving his commands? Say not then that the deed was badly done but unfortunately for me who did it

A blessed life those mortals lead who make wise marriages but those who wed unhappily are alike unfortunate in their public and private concerns

Ch Tis ever woman s way to thwart men s fortunes to the increase of their sorrow

Ty Since thou adoptest so bold a tone suppressing naught but answering me back in such wise that my heart is vexed within me thou wilt incense me to go to greater lengths in procuring thy execution and I shall regard this as a fine addition to my purpose in coming hither to deck my daughter s grave Yes I will go to the chosen council of Argos and set the citizens whether they will or not on thee and thy sister that ye may suffer stoning She deserves to die even more than thou for it was she who embittered thee against thy mother by carrying tales to thine ear from time to time to whet thy hate the more announcing dreams from Agamemnon and speaking of the amour with Ægisthus as an abomination to the gods in Hades for even here on earth it was hateful till she set the house ablaze with fires never kindled by Hephæstus. This I tell thee Menelaus and more—I will perform it If then thou makest my hatred or our connexion of any account seek not to avert this miscreant s doom in direct defiance of the gods but leave him to be stoned to death by the citizens else never set foot on Spartan soil Remember thou hast been told all this and choose not for friends the ungodly excluding more righteous folk

Ho! servants lead me hence. *Exit* TYNDAREUS

Or Get thee gone! that the remainder of my speech may be addressed to Menelaus without interruption free from the restrictions thy old age exerts

Wherefore Menelaus art thou pacing round and round to think the matter over up and down in thought perplexed?

Men Let me alone! I am somewhat at a loss as I turn it over in my mind towards which side I am to lean

Or Do not then decide finally but after first hearing what I have to say then make up thy mind

Men Good advice! say on There are occasions when silence would be better than speech there are others when the reverse holds good

Or I will begin forthwith A long statement has advantages over a short one and is more intelligible to listen to Give me nothing of thine own Menelaus, but repay what thou didst thyself receive from my father (*As* MENELAUS *makes a deprecating gesture*) 'Tis not goods I mean save my life, and that is goods the dearest I possess.

Say I am doing wrong Well I have a right to a little wrong doing at thy hands to requite that wrong for my father Agamemnon also did wrong in gathering the host of Hellas and goin up against Ilium not that he had sinned himself but he was trying to find a cure for the sin and wrong-doing of thy wife So this is one thing thou art bound to pay me back For he had really sold his life to thee a duty owed by friend to friend toiling hard in the press of battle that so thou mightest win thy wife again This is what thou didst receive at Troy mak me the same return For one brief day exert thyself not ten full years on my behalf standing up in my defence

As for the loan paid to Aulis in the blood of my sister I leave that to thy credit not saying Slay Hermione for in my present plight thou must needs have an advantage over me and I must let that pass But grant my hapless sire this boon my life and the life of her who has pined so long in maidenhood my sister for by my death I shall leave my father s house without an heir

Impossible! thou lt say Why there s the point of that old adage Friends are bound to succour friends in trouble. But when fortune giveth of her best what need of friends? for God s help is enough of itself when he chooses to give it

All Hellas credits thee with deep affection for thy wife—and I am not saying this with any subtle attempt at wheedling thee—by her I implore thee.

(*As* MENELAUS *turns away*) Ah me my misery! at what a pass have I arrived! what avails my wretched effort? Still (*preparing to make a final appeal*) tis my whole family on whose behalf I am making this appeal! O my uncle my father s own brother! imagine that the dead man in his grave is listening that his spirit is hovering o er thy head and speaking through my lips I have said my say with reference to tears and groans and misfortunes and I have begged my life—the aim of every man s endeavour not of mine alone

Ch I too weak woman though I am beseech thee as thou hast the power succour those in need

Men Orestes thou art a man for whom I have a deep regard and I would fain help thee bear thy load of woe yea for it is a duty too, to lend a kinsman such assistance by dying or slaying his enemies, provided Heaven grants the means I only wish I had that power granted me by the gods as it is I have arrived quite destitute of allies after my long weary wanderings with such feeble succour as my surviving friends afford As then we should never get the better of Pelasgian Argos by fighting our hopes now rest on this the chance of prevailing by persuasion and we must try that for how can you win a great cause by small efforts? it were senseless even to wish it For when the people fall into a fury and their rage is still fresh they are as hard to ap-

just as a fierce fire is to quench; but if you gently slacken your hold and yield a little to their tension, carefully watching your opportunity, they may possibly exhaust their fury; and then as soon as they have spent their rage, thou mayest obtain whatever thou wilt from them without any trouble. For they have a natural sense of pity, and a hot temper too, an invaluable quality if you watch it closely. So I will go and try to persuade Tyndareus and the citizens to moderate their excessive anger against thee; for it is with them as with a ship; she dips if her sheet is hauled too taut, but rights herself again if it is let go.

Attempts to do too much are as keenly resented by the citizens as they are by the gods; and so it must be by cleverness, not by the force of superior numbers, I frankly tell thee, that I must try to save thee. No prowess of mine as perhaps thou fanciest could do it; for had it been so easy to triumph single-handed over the troubles that beset thee, I should never have tried to bring Argives over to the side of mercy; but, as it is, the wise find themselves forced to bow to fortune. *Exit* MENELAUS.

Or. O thou that hast no use, save to head a host in a woman's cause! thou traitor in thy friends' defence! dost turn thy back on me? What Agamemnon did is all forgotten.

Ah, my father! thy friends, it seems, desert thee in adversity. Alas! I am betrayed; no longer have I any hope of finding a refuge where I may escape the death-sentence of Argos; for this man was my haven of safety.

Ha! a welcome sight, there comes Pylades, my best of friends, running hither from Phocis. A trusty comrade is a more cheering sight in trouble than a calm is to sailors.

Enter PYLADES.

Pylades. On my way hither I traversed the town with more haste than I need have used, to find thee and thy sister, having heard or rather myself seen the citizens assembling under the belief that they [illegible] your immediate execution. What is happening here? how is it with thee? how farest thou, my best of comrades, friends, and kin? for thou art all these to me.

Or. Let one brief word declare to thee my evil case—it is Ruin.

Py. Include me then in it; for friends have all in common.

Or. Menelaus is a traitor to me and my sister.

Py. 'Tis only natural that the husband of a traitress should prove a traitor.

Or. He has not repaid me when he came than if he had never come.

Py. Has he really arrived then in this land?

Or. He was a long time coming, but very soon detected for all that in treachery to his friends.

Py. And did he bring his wife, that queen of traitresses, with him on his ship?

Or. It was not he who brought her, but she him.

Py. Where is she who proved the ruin of so many Achaeans, though she was only a woman?

Or. In my house, if, that is, I ought to call it mine.

Py. And thou—what didst thou say to thy father's brother?

Or. I besought him not to look on, while I and my sister were slain by the citizens.

Py. By heaven! what said he to this? I fain would know.

Or. Caution was the line he took—the usual policy of traitorous friends.

Py. What excuse does he allege? when I have heard that, I know all.

Or. The worthy sire arrived, who begat those peerless daughters.

Py. Thou meanest Tyndareus; he was angry with thee, perhaps, for his daughter's sake.

Or. Thou hast it; and Menelaus preferred his relationship to my father's.

Py. Had he not courage enough to share thy troubles, when he did come?

Or. Not he; he never was a warrior, though a doughty knight amongst women.

Py. Thy case is desperate, it seems, and thou must die.

Or. The citizens are to give their vote about us on the question of the murder.

Py. And what is that to decide? tell me, for I am alarmed.

Or. Our life or death; so short the words that tell of things so long!

Py. Leave the palace, then, with thy sister and fly.

Or. Look! we are being watched by guards on every side.

Py. I saw that the streets of the city were secured with armed men.

Or. We are as closely beleaguered as a city by its foes.

Py. Ask me also of my state, for I too am ruined.

Or. By whom? this would be a further sorrow to add to mine.

Py. Strophius, my father, in a fit of anger hath banished me his halls.

Or. On some private charge, or one in which the citizens share?

Py. He says it is a crime to have helped thee slay thy mother.

Or. Woe is me! it seems my troubles will cause thee grief as well.

Py. I am not like Menelaus; this must be endured.

Or. Art thou not afraid that Argos will desire thy death as well as mine?

Py. I am not theirs to punish; I belong to Phocis.

Or. A terrible thing is the mob, when it has villains to lead it.

Py. Aye, but with honest leaders its counsels are honest.

Or. Go to; we must consult together.

Py. What is it we must consider?

Or. Suppose I go and tell the citizens—

Py. That thy action was just—

Or. In avenging my father?

Py I am afraid they will be glad enough to catch thee

Or Well am I to crouch in fear and die without a word?

Py That were cowardly

Or How then shall I act?

Py Suppose thou stay here what means of safety hast thou?

Or None

Py And if thou go away is there any hope of escaping thy troubles?

Or There might be possibly

Py Well *is not that better than staying?*

Or *Am I to go then?*

Py Yes if thou *art* slain there will be some honour in dying thus

Or True thus I escape cowardice

Py *Better than by staying*

Or After all I can justify my action

Py Pray that this may be the only view they take

Or Some one or two maybe will pity me—

Py Yes thy noble birth is a great point

Or Resenting my father s death

Py That is all quite clear

Or I must go for to die ignobly is a coward s part

Py Well said!

Or Shall we tell my sister?

Py God forbid!

Or True there might be tears

Py Would not that be a grave omen?

Or Yes silence is manifestly the better course

Py Thou wilt thus gain time

Or There is only one obstacle in my way —

Py What fresh objection now?

Or I am afraid the goddesses will prevent me by madness

Py Nay but I will take care of thee

Or A wretched task to come in contact with a sick man

Py That is not my view in thy case

Or Beware of becoming a partner in my madness

Py Let that pass!

Or Thou wilt not hesitate?

Py Not I hesitation is a grave mischief amongst friends

Or On then pilot of my course!

Py A service I am glad to render

Or And guide me to my father s tomb

Py For what purpose?

Or That I may appeal to him to save me

Py No doubt that is the proper way

Or May I not even see my mother s grave!

Py No she was an enemy But hasten supporting those limbs so slow from sickness on mine that the decision of Argos may not catch thee first for I will carry thee through the town careless of the mob and unabashed For how shall I prove my friendship if not by helping thee in sore distress?

Or Ah! the old saying again Get friends not relations only For a man whose soul is knit with thine though he is not of thy kin is better worth owning as a friend than a whole host of relations.

Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

Ch Long long ago by reason of an old misfortune to their house the sons of Atreus saw the tide roll back from weal to woe carrying with it their great prosperity and that prowess proudly vaunted through the length of Hellas and by the streams of Simois on the day that strife found its way to the sons of Tantalus—that strife for a golden ram to end in bitter banqueting and the slaughter of high born babes and this is why a succession of murders committed by kinsmen never fails the twin Atridæ.

What seemed so right became so wrong to cut a mother s skin with ruthless hand and show the blood stained sword to the sun s bright beams and yet her guilty deed was a piece of frantic wickedness and the folly of beings demented Hapless daughter of Tyndareus! in terror of death she screamed to him My son this is a crime thy bold attempt upon thy mother s life do not whilst honouring thy father fasten on thyself an eternity of shame

To stain the hand in a mother s blood! What affliction on earth surpasseth this? what calls for keener grief or pity? Oh! what an awful crime Agamemnon s son committed ending in his raving madness so that he is become a prey to the avenging fiends for the murder darting distracted glances round him! O the wretch! to have seen a mother s bosom o er her robe of golden woof and yet make her his victim in recompense for his father s sufferings!

Enter ELECTRA

El Surely friends my poor Orestes hath never left the house mastered by the heaven sent madness?

Ch No but he is gone to stand the trial appointed concerning his life before the Argive populace in which it will be decided whether he and thou are to live or die

El Oh! why did he do it? who persuaded him?

Ch Pylades but this messenger now close at hand will no doubt tell us thy brother s fate at the trial

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger Woe is thee unhappy daughter of our captain Agamemnon my lady Electra! hearken to the sad tidings I bring thee

El Alas! our fate is sealed thy words show it thou art clearly come with tidings of woe

Mes To-day have the folk decided by vote that thou and thy brother are to die poor lady

El Alas! my expectations are realized I have long feared this and been wasting away in mourning for what was sure to happen But come old friend describe the trial and tell me what was said in the Argive assembly to condemn us and confirm our doom is it stoning or the sword that is to cut short my existence? for I share my brother s misfortunes

Mes I had just come from the country and was entering the gates anxious to learn what was de

cided about thee and Orestes—for I was ever well-disposed to thy father and it was thy house that fed and reared m poor tis true yet loyal t the serv r of friends— hen lo! I saw a crowd streaming to their seats on onder height where tis said Danaus first gathered his people and settled them in new homes, when he was pa ing the penalty to Ægyptus. So, when I saw them thron in t gether I asked a citizen, What news in Argos? Ha e t d ngs of hostilit es ruffled the city of Danaus? But he re ed, Dost thou not see the ma Orestes on his way t be tried for hi life Then I beheld an un expected ht which I would I ne er had seen—Pylades and thy brother appro hing to ther the one w th his head sunken o his breast weakened by si kness the other like a brother in th way he sha ed his friend s so row t nding his complaint with constant care

Now hen th Arg es were f lly gathe ed a herald ro and asked, Wh wishes t give his pin io wheth r Orestes is to be slain or not f r the m der of his mothe ?" Then up stood Talthybius, ho h lped thy father sack the Phrygians city H adopted a trimming tone a mere tool f those n power he al ays is, exp essing high adm rat on for th father but saying not a w rd f r thy brother u n g his crooked sentiments in pet ous words, to this effect t is n t a good precedent h is establish g as regards parents, an 'all th whil he had a pleasant look fo the friend of Ægisthus. That is l ke th tribe of herald they always t p cross to t lucky sid hoso hath influence i the city or a post i th government h is th friend for them Aft him prince Diomedes mad hara gu not dea h but exile was the p nishment he would ha e had th m i ct on thee and th b oth r d so keep lear of guilt Som murmured tl eir asse t as n his w d w e good b t othe s disappro ed

Next tood p a f llow who cannot close his lips on hose impud nc is his st gth an Arg e b t not of Argos n lien f rced on u co fident n blust nd I c d g oran e nd plausible enou to i vol his hear rs i som mischief sooner or later for he a ma with a pleasing trick of peech, b t of unsound p nc ples, persuades the mob t is a serious vil to the sat wh ea all ho g e sound and sens bl d n all occasions, if not immediatel usef l to th state yet p ove so fterwa d And thi is th l ght in wl ch to ga d pa ty leader f th posit on m ch th sam in the case of an rat r and a man n offi This fell w was for ston thee nd O estes t death b t t was T nda eus ho kept su gesting guments of this kind t him a he u ged th death f both f you.

Another th n tood p not fai to outward iew perhaps b t a b a e ma ra ly comi g n tact with th town o th gatherings n the ma ket pla yeoman one of a class who f rm the only real support of our country shrewd enough and eager to grapple with the arguments his character without a blemish his walk in l fe beyond reproach He mo ed that they should crown Orestes, the son of Agamemnon for showing his willingness to avenge a father in the blood of a w cked profligate who was pre enting men from t king up arms and go ng on f reign serv ce since said he those who re ma n behind corrupt and seduce our wives left at home to keep house To the better sort his words carried con iction and no one rose to speak after him So thy brother advanced and spoke Ye dwellers in the land of Inachus! Pela gians in an ci nt times, and later Dana I helped you no less than my fath r when I slew my mother for if the murder of men by women is to be sanct oned th n the sooner y u d e the better f r you oth rwise you must needs become the slaves of women and that will be doin the ery reverse of hat ye shou d As it is, she who betra ed my fath r s honour has met her death but if ye take m l fe a s proposed the strictne s of the law becomes rela ed a d the sooner e ery one of you is dead the better for t w ll nev er be daring at any rate that they will lack." Yet for ll h seemed to speak so fa r he could not persuade the assembly but that villa n who spoke n fa our of slaying thee and thy brother gained h s po nt by appealing to the mob

O estes, poo wr tch scarce preva led on them to spa e him death by stonin promis ng to d e by his own hand and thou by th within the space of to-day and Pylades is now brin ing him from the co cla e w eping the while and his friends bear him company with te rs and lamentat on so he cometh a sad and piteous s ght for thee to see M k ready the sword prepare the noose f r thy neck, for thou mu t d e thy noble b rth availed th e naught nor Phœbus eith r f om his seat on the tripod at Delphi no! he was thy undoi g

Exit MESSE GE

Ch Ah hapless maid! How dumb thou art thy face eiled a d bent pon the ground as if ere long to st rt on a course of lam ntation and waili g!

El Land of Argo I f take up the dirge, doing bloody outrage on my cheek w th pearly na l a d beat ng on my head th m ed of Perseph ne that fair u g goddes f the nethe world Let the land of the Cyclopes b eak f rth nto wailin for the so ows of ur house lay g the steel upon the head to c op it close This s th piteo s train that goeth up f those wh a e doomed to per h the h ef tai s o e f Hellas

Gon gon nd b ought t naught s all the race of P lop so s' a d w th them th blessedness that r igned th happy h m of y e the wrath of God gat hold on them a d that cruel mu dering te wh ch p a) am ng the c t ens.

Woe to you! y t ibes of short li ed men full of tea nd born to suffe i g se how fate un e unter to you hopes! All n time long march rece e in turn th t se eral troubles and man throughout his life ca no er rest

Said t be Cleophon, the demogogue of Athens he was of Thracian extraction.

Oh! to reach that rock which hangs suspended midway twixt earth and heaven that fragment from Olympus torn which swings on chains of gold *in ceaseless revolution that I may utter my lament* to Tantalus my forefather who begat the ancestors of my house these were witnesses of infatuate deeds when Pelops in four horsed car drove winged steeds in hot pursuit along the sea hurling the corpse of murdered Myrtilus into the heaving deep after his race near the foam flecked strand of Geræstus From this came a woful curse upon my house in the day that there appeared among the flocks of Atreus breeder of horses that baleful portent of a lamb with golden fleece the creation of the son of Maia for from it sprang a quarrel which *made the sun s* winged steeds swerve from their course turning them by a westward track along the sky towards the single horse of Dawn and Zeus diverted the career of the seven Pleiads into a new path yea and it is that banquet to which Thyestes gave his name and *the guilty love of Cretan Ærope* the treacherous wife that is requiting those murders with others but the crowning woe is come on me and on my sire by reason of the bitter destinies of our house

Ch See where thy brother comes condemned to die and with him Pylades most loyal of friends true as a brother guiding the feeble steps of Orestes as he paces carefully at his side

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES

El Ah! brother mine I weep to see thee stand before the tomb face to face with the funeral pyre *Again that sigh escapes me my senses leave me as* I take my last fond look at thee

Or Peace! an end to womanish lamenting! resign thyself to thy fate True tis a piteous end but yet we needs must bear the present

El How can I hold my peace when we poor sufferers are no more *to gaze upon the sun god s* light?

Or Oh! spare me *that* death! Enough that this unhappy wretch is already slain by Argives forego our present sufferings

El Alas for thy young life Orestes! alas for the untimely death o ertaking it! *Thou shouldst have* begun to live just as thou art dying

Or Unman me not I do adjure thee! bringing me to tears by the recollection of my sorrows

El We are to die and I cannot but bemoan our fate for all men grieve to lose dear life

Or This is the day appointed us and we must fit the dangling noose about our necks or whet the sword for use

El Be thou my executioner brother that no Argive may insult the child of Agamemnon and slay her

Or Enough that I have a mother s blood upon me thee I will not slay but die by any self inflicted death thou wilt

El Agreed I will not be behind thee in using the sword only I long to throw my arms about thy neck

Or Enjoy that idle satisfaction if embraces have any joy for those who are come so nigh to death

El Dear brother mine! bearer of a name that sounds most sweet in thy sister s ear partner in one soul with her!

Or Oh! thou wilt melt my heart I long to give thee back a fond embrace and why should such a wretch as I feel any shame henceforth? *(Embracing* ELECTRA) Heart to heart O sister mine! how sweet to me this close embrace! In place of wedded joys, in place of babes this greeting is all that is possible to us poor sufferers

El Ah would the self same sword if only it might be could slay us both and one coffin of cedar wood receive us!

Or That would be an end most sweet but surely *thou seest we are too destitute of friends to* be allowed one tomb between us

El Did not that coward Menelaus that traitor to my father s memory even speak for thee making an effort to save thy life?

Or He did not so much as show himself but *having his hopes centred on the throne he was more* cautious than to attempt the rescue of relatives

Ah! well let us take care to quit ourselves gallantly and die as most befits the children of Agamemnon I for my part will let this city see my noble spirit when I plunge the sword to my heart and thou for thine must imitate my brave example Do thou Pylades stand umpire to our bloody feat and when we both are dead lay out our bodies decently then carry them to our father s grave and bury us there with him Farewell now I go to do *the deed* as thou seest

Py Stay a moment there is first one point I have to blame thee for if thou thinkest I care to live when thou art dead

Or But why art thou called on to die with me?

Py Canst ask? What is life to me with thee my *comrade gone?*

Or Thou didst not slay thy mother as I did to my sorrow

Py At least I helped thee and so I ought to suffer alike

Or Surrender to thy father and seek not to die with me *Thou hast still a city while I no longer* have thou hast still thy father s home and mighty stores of wealth and though thou art disappointed in thy marriage with my poor sister whom I betrothed to thee from a deep regard for thy fellowship yet choose thee another bride and rear a family for the tie which bound us binds no more *Fare thee* well my comrade fondly called for us such faring cannot be for thee perhaps for we that are as dead are robbed of joy henceforth

Py How far thou art from grasping what I mean! Oh! may the fruitful earth the radiant sky refuse to hold my blood if ever I turn traitor and desert thee when I have cleared myself for I not only shared in the murder which I will not disown but also schemed the whole plot for which thou art now paying the penalty wherefore I ought also to die as much as thou or she for I consider her whose hand thou didst promise me as my wife What

precious tale shall I ever tell when I reach Delphi, the citad l of Phocis? I who bef re your misfor tunes came was so close a friend but cea ed to be when thou ert u l cky That must n t be nol this is my business too But si ce we are to d e let us tak co nsel together that Menelaus may sha e our misfort ne

Or Best of friends! if only I could see this ere I die!

Py Hearken then, nd d fer awhile the fatal st oke

Or I ill wait the hope of a en ing me on my foe.

Py Hush! I ha e mal confidence in wom n

Or Ha e no fear of these for they a e our fri nds who are here

Py Let us kill H len a bitter grief to M laus.

Or How? I am eady nou h if there is any ch of success

Py W h our swords she is h d ng in thy house

Or Ay that sh is, and already sh is putting her seal on erythin

Py Sh shall d so *no more* after she is wedded t Hades.

Or Impos ble! she has her barbarian attendants.

Py Barbaria s ndeed! I am n t the man to fear any Phrygian

Or Creat res only fit to look aft r mirrors and unguents!

Py What! h s he b ou ht Troj n effem nacy w h her here?

Or So much so that Hellas is become too small for her t live in.

Py The race of sla es n match f r free born men.

Or W ll if I can d this deed I fear not death twice over

Py No, nor I eith f it thee I am a enging

Or Declare the matter and tell me what thou p oposest

Py We ill ent the house o th pretence of go g t o d th.

Or So far I f llow thee b t not beyond

Py We w ll begi bew li g ur suff rings to h r

Or A e so that she ill shed tears, altho h he heart is glad

Py And we shall the be n the same pred cament a she.

Or How shall we p oceed ext i th ent rprise?

Py W shall ha swo d co cealed in ou cloaks.

Or B t bef ttacki h how e we to kill her ttenda t ?

Py We ill shut th m p i diff rent parts of th house

Or And whoever ef ses to be quiet we must kil.

Py That don our d ed hows us to what we m t d ect ou fforts.

Or T H len s l u ht r I unde st d that h ord.

Py Thou ha t t ow hear how sound my scheme is f we had drawn the sword upo a w man of better morals, t would ha e bee foul murder but as it is, she will be pun shed for the sake of all Hellas, whose sires she slew wh le those whose ch ldren she destroyed whose wi es she widowed ill hout aloud for joy and kindle the altars of the gods, in voking on our heads a thousand bl ssings, because we shed this wicked woman s blood for after killi her thy name shall no more be the matricide b t resign ng that titl thou shalt succeed to a better a d be called th e slayer of Helen the mur d ress. It can ne er ne er be right that Menel us should p osper and thy f ther th y si ter and thou be put to death and th mother too—(but I pass that by for it i not seemly to mention it)—while he possesses th h me though t was by Agamemnon s prowess that h reco ered h s wife M y I perish then if I draw ot my sw rd upon her! But if aft r all we f l to compass Helen s death, we will fire the pala e and d e f r we will n t fail to achieve one dist ncti n be it an h nourable death or an hon ou able escape ther fr m

Ch The dau hter of T ndareus, wh has brought shame on her sex h s justly earned the hate of e ery woman

Or Ah! th re is nothi g better than a trusty f end ne ther wealth n r p nc ly power m re number is a senseless th ng to set off gainst a noble fri nd Such a t thou for th ou d d t not only devi e the e geance e took on Æ isthus but d d t stand by m at the g tes of dang r and n again thou art offe n me a mea s to pu sh my foes and dost ot st nd aloof thyself but I w ll cease praising the fo th re i someth ng wearisome e en in be ing prai ed to excess. Now since in ny case I must b eathe my last I w uld fain my death sho ld do my foe some hurt that I may requite with ruin those who betrayed me a d that they too who made me suffer may taste of so ro . Lo! I m the son of that Agamemn n who was cou ted worthy t ule H llas, ex rt g no tyrant s power but yet possessed of almost god l ke migh t him will I not d s rac by subm tt g to d e l ke a sla e ol my la t breath shall be free and I w ll a e ge me on M nelaus For ould w but secur o object we should be l cky f from some une pe ted qua t r a means of safety sho ld arise and w be the slayers, not the sla n th s s what I pray for for th s wish f min t a pleasant d eam to chee the hea r w thout cost by mean f the tong s s wi ged utterances,

El Wh brothe I ha e t! mea s of saf ty fi st f thee th n fo him and thi dly f r myself

Or Di ine pro id e I suppose But h r use n ug est , that! seei g th t I kn w the natural shrewdness of thy he t

El Hearken moment d thou (*to* PYLA)like wise att nd

Or Sa on the p ospect of hearin good news aff d a e t n pleasu e

El Th k owest Helen s daughter? of course tho m st

Or Hermio e whom my own mother reared—know her? yes

El She hath gone to Clytæmnestra s grave.

Or With what intent? What hope art thou hinting at?

El Her purpose was to pour a libation over the tomb of our mother

Or Well granting that how does this which thou hast mentioned conduce to our safety

El Seize her as a hostage on her way back

Or What good can thy suggested remedy do us three friends?

El If after Helen s slaughter Menelaus does any thing to thee or to Pylades and me—for we three friends are wholly one—say thou wilt slay Hermione then draw thy sword and keep it at the maiden s throat If Menelaus when he sees Helen weltering in her blood tries to save thee to insure his daughter s life allow him to take his child to his father s arms but if he makes no effort to curb the angry outburst and leaves thee to die then do thou plunge thy sword in his daughter s throat Methinks though he show himself violent at first he will gradually grow milder for he is not naturally bold or brave That is the tower of defence I have for us and now my tale is told

Or O thou that hast the spirit of a man though thy body clearly shows thee a tender woman how far more worthy thou to live than die! This Pylades is the peerless woman thou wilt lose to thy sorrow or shouldst thou live wilt marry to thy joy!

Py Then may I live and may she be brought to the capital of Phocis with all the honours of a happy marriage!

Or How soon will Hermione return to the palace? All else thou saidst was well if only we are lucky in catching the villain s child

El I expect she is near the house already for the time agrees exactly

Or Tis well Plant thyself before the palace Electra my sister and await the maid s approach keep watch in case any one an ally maybe or my father s brother forestal us by his entry ere the bloody deed is completed and then make a signal to be heard inside the house either by beating on a panel of the door or calling to us within

Let us enter now Pylades and arm ourselves for the final struggle for thou art the comrade that sharest the enterprise with me Hearken! father in thy home of darkest gloom! it is thy son Orestes who is calling thee to come to the rescue of the destitute it is on thy account I am unjustly suffering woe and it is by thy brother that I have been betrayed for practising justice wherefore I would fain take and slay his wife and do thou help us compass this

El Oh! come my father come! if within the ground thou hearest the cry of thy children who for thy sake are dying

Py Hear my prayer too Agamemnon kinsman of my father and save thy children

Or I slew my mother—

Py I held the sword—

El 'Twas I that urged them on and set them free from fear—

Or All to succour thee my sire

El I proved no traitress either

Py Wilt thou not hearken then to these reproaches and save thy children?

Or With tears I pour thee a libation

El And I with notes of woe

Py Cease and let us about our business. If prayers do really penetrate the ground he hears O Zeus, god of my fathers O Justice queen revered vouchsafe us three success three friends are we but one the struggle one the forfeit all must pay to live or die

Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES

El My own townswomen of foremost rank in Argos the home of the Pelasgi!

Ch Mistress why dost thou address us? for still this honoured name is left thee in the Danaid town

El Station yourselves some here along the high road others yonder on some other path to watch the house

Ch But why dost thou summon me to this service? tell me dear mistress

El I am afraid that some one who is stationed at the house for a bloody purpose may cause troubles, only to find them himself

Semi Chorus I Lead on let us hasten I will keep careful watch upon this track towards the east

Semi Ch II And I on this that leadeth westward Throw a glance sideways letting the eye range from point to point then look back again.

Semi Ch I We are directing them as thou biddest

El Cast your eyes around let them peer in every direction through your tresses

Semi Ch II Who is that on the road? Who is yonder countryman I see wandering round thy house?

El Ah! friends, we are undone he will at once reveal to our enemies the armed ambush of that lion like pair

Semi Ch I (*Reconnoitring*) Calm thy fears the road is not occupied as thou thinkest dear mistress.

El (*Turning to the other watchers*) And can I count thy side safe still? reassure me is yonder space before the court yard still deserted?

Semi Ch II All goes well here look to thy own watch for no Argive is approaching us

Semi Ch I Thy report agrees with mine there is no noise here either

El Well then let me make myself heard in the gateway (*Calling through the door*) Why are ye with in the house delaying to spill your victim s blood now that all is quiet? They do not hear ah woe is me! Can it be that their swords have lost their edge at the sight of her beauty? Soon will some mail clad Argive hurrying to her rescue attack the palace Keep a better look out tis no time for sitting still bestir yourselves some here some there

Ch My eye is ranging to and fro all along the road

Hel (*Within*) Help Pelasgian Argos! I am being foully murdered

Semi-Ch. I Heard ye that? Those men are now about th bloody deed

Semi-Ch. II 'Tis H len screaming to hazard a guess.

El. Come, eternal might of Zeus, oh, come to help my friends!

Hel. (*Within*) Menelaus, I am bein murd_red, but thou, thou h near affordest m no aid

El. O. stab, and kill all eager for the fray dart out your swords, do bl handed double ed ed against the woman who left her father s home and husband's sd and did to death so many of the men of H llas, slain beside the river bank where tears rained down beneath the iron darts all round Scamander s eddying tides.

Ch. Hush! hush! I ca ht th sound of a foot fall on the road near the house

El. Ladies, my dearest friends, it is Hermione advancing into the midst of th bloodshed Let our clamour cease. a sh comes headlo g into the meshes of the net Fair will the quarry pro e if caught. Resume your station, looks composed and faces not betray what has happened and I too will wear a look f mela chol as f forsooth I knew nothing of that desperate deed. (H RMI NE *enters*) Ah! maiden, hast thou come from wreathin Cly temnestra s gra e and from pour n libations to the dead?

Her Yes, I ha e eturned fter securin a gra cious reception but I was filled with some alarm at t th import of cry I heard in the palace as I was still at a distance

El. But wh ? Our present l t gives cause for groans.

Her Hush! What is thy news?

El. Argos has sentenced Orestes and myself to death.

Her Kinsfolk of my own! God forbid!

El. It is decreed the y k f ne essity is on our necks.

Her Was this th reason then f the cry within?

El. Yes, twas the cry of th suppliant as h fell at Helen knees.

Her Who is he? I am none th wiser if thou tell me not.

El. Orestes the hapless, entreating mercy for him self nd me.

Her Good reason then has the house r *cry out*

El. What else would mak a man ent eat more earnest? Come throw th self befor thy mother in her proud prosperity and join th friend n be seeching Menelaus not to look on and see us d O thou that wert nursed the same mothe arms as I, ha e pity on s nd lieve ou pain Come hither to th trug l nd I myself will be thy guide for thou nd thou alone hast the issue of our safe th hands.

Her Behold me hasten g to th house as far as rests w th me gard yoursel es as safe.

Exit H RMI ONE.

El. Now friends, secure the prey in our armed ambush in the house.

Her (*Calling from within*) Ah! who are these I see?

Or (*Within*) Silence! tis our safety not thine thou art here to insure.

El. Hold her hard and fast point a sword at her throat then wait in silence that Menelaus may learn that they are men, not Phrygian cowards, whom he has found and treated as only cowards deserve

Ch. What ho! my comrades, raise a din, a din and shout before the house, that the murder done may not s spire the Arg es with wild alarm, to make them bri a d to the royal palace, before I see for certain whether Helen s corpse lies weltering in the house or hear the news from one of her at tendants for I know but a part of the tragedy of the rest I am not sure. Thanks to Justice the wrath of God has come on Helen for she filled all Hellas with tears because of her accursed paramour Paris of Ida who took our countrymen to Troy

But hist! the bolts of the palace-doors rattle be silent fo one of her Phrygians is coming out from whom we will inquire of the state of matters within.

Enter PHRYGIAN EUNUCH.

Phrygian Eunuch (*Expressing the most abject terror*) From death escaped in my ba baric slippers ha e I fled away away from the Argive sword, escaping as best a ba barian might by clamberin over the ce dar beam that roof the porch and through the Doric tr gl phs (O my *country my country!*) Alack, la k! oh! whither can I fl ve foreign dames, winging m way throu h the clear bright sky or o er th sea whose circle horned Ocean draws, as he girdles the world in his *embrace?*

Ch. What news, sla e of Helen creature from Ida?

P.E. Ah m for Ilium, for Ilium, the city of *Phry gia*, and f r Ida s holy h ll with fruitful soil in forei n accents hear me raise a plainti strain over thee whose ruin luckless Helen caused—that lovely child whom Leda bo e to a feathe ed swan, to be a *curse to* Apollo s to rs of polished stone Ah! well a-da ! woe to Dardania for the wailings wrung from t b the steeds that bought his minion Ganymede for Zeus.

Ch. T ll us plainly exactly what happened in the house for t ') ow I ha e been guessing at what I do not clearly understand

P.E. Ah for Linus! woe is him!" that is what ba barian say in their eastern tongue as prelude to th dir of death, when val blood is spilt upon the ground by deadly i on blades.

To t ll thee exactl what happened there came int the palace two lion l ke men f Hellas, tw ns in nam e your famous chief was sire of one twas said the other was the son of Strophius a crafty kna was *he like to* Od sseus, subtle silent but staunch to his friends, darin enou h for any val ia t deed ersed in war and bloodthirsty as a ser pent Ruin seize him for his qu et plottin the villa !

I the cam their e es bedimmed with tears, and took their seat n al h mil ty near the chair f

the lady whom Paris the archer once wedded one *on this side one on that to right and left with* weapons on them and both threw their suppliant arms round the knees of Helen whereon her Phrygian servants started to their feet in wild alarm each in his terror calling to his fellow Beware of treachery! To some there seemed no cause but others thought that the viper who had slain his mother was entangling the daughter of Tyndareus in the toils of his snare

Ch And where wert thou the while? fled long before in terror?

P E It happened that I in Phrygian style was wafting the breeze past Helen s curls with a round feather fan stationed before her face and she the while as *eastern ladies use was twisting flax on her* distaff with her fingers but letting her yarn fall on the floor for she was minded to embroider purple raiment as an offering from the Trojan spoils a gift for Clytaemnestra at her tomb

Then to the Spartan maid Orestes spake Daughter of Zeus quit thy chair and cross the floor to a seat at the old altar of Pelops our ancestor to hear something I have to say Therewith he led the way and she followed little guessing his designs Meantime his accomplice the Phocian miscreant was off on other business. Out of my way! Well Phrygians always were cowards So he shut them up in different parts of the house some in the stables others in private chambers one here one there disposing of them severally at a distance from their mistress

Ch What happened next?

P E Mother of Ida mighty parent! Oh! the murderous scenes and lawless wickedness that I witnessed in the royal palace! They drew forth swords from under their purple cloaks each darting his eye all round him in either direction to see that none was near and then like boars that range the hills *they stood at bay before her crying Thou must* die it is thy craven husband that will slay thee because he betrayed his brother s son to death in Argos But she with piercing screams brought down her snow white arm upon her bosom and loudly *smote on her poor head then turned her steps in* flight shod in her golden shoon but Orestes outstripping her slippered feet clutched his fingers in her hair and bending back her neck on to her left shoulder was on the point of driving the grim steel *into her throat*

Ch Where were those Phrygians in the house to help her then?

P E With a loud cry we battered down the doors and doorposts of the rooms we had been penned in *by means of bars and ran to her assistance from* every direction one arming himself with stones another with javelins a third having a drawn sword but Pylades came to meet us all undaunted like Hector of Troy or Aias triple plumed as I saw him on the threshold *of Priam s palace and we met* point to point But then it became most manifest how inferior we Phrygians were to the warriors of Hellas in martial prowess There was one man flying another slain a third wounded yet another craving mercy to stave off death but we escaped under cover of the darkness while some were falling others staggering and some laid low in death And just as her unhappy mother sunk to the ground to die came luckless Hermione to the palace whereon those twain like Bacchanals when they drop their wands and seize a mountain cub rushed and seized her then turned again to the daughter of Zeus to slay her but lo! she had vanished from the room passing right through the house by magic spells or wizards arts or heavenly fraud O Zeus and earth, O day and night!

What happened afterwards I know not for I stole *out of the palace and ran away So Menelaus went* through all his toil and trouble to recover his wife Helen from Troy to no purpose

Ch Behold another strange sight succeeding its predecessors I see Orestes sword in hand before the palace advancing with excited steps.

Enter ORESTES

Or Where is he who fled from the palace to escape my sword?

P E (*Falling at the feet of* ORESTES) Before thee I prostrate myself O prince and do obeisance in my foreign way

Or Tis not Ilium that is now the scene but the land of Argos

P E No matter where the wise love life more than death

Or I suppose that shouting of thine was not for Menelaus to come to the rescue?

P F Oh no! it was to help thee I called out for thou art more deserving

Or Was it a just fate that overtook the daughter of Tyndareus?

P E Most just though she had had three throats to die with

Or Thy cowardice makes thee glib these are not thy real sentiments

P E Why surely she deserved it for the havoc she made of Hellas as well as Troy?

Or Swear thou art not saying this to humour me or I will slay thee

P E By my life I swear—an oath likely to be true in my case

Or Did every Phrygian in Troy show the same terror of steel as thou dost?

P E Oh take thy sword away! held so near it throws a horrid gleam of blood

Or Art thou afraid of being turned to stone as if it were a Gorgon thou seest?

P E To a stone no! but to a corpse that *Gorgon s head is not within my ken*

Or A slave and so fearful of death which will release thee from trouble!

P E Bond or free every one is glad to gaze upon the light

Or *Well said! thy shrewdness saves thee go within.*

P E Thou wilt not kill me after all?

Or Thou art spared!

P.E. O gracious words!

Or. Come, I shall change my mind—

P.E. Ill-omened utterance!

Or. Thou fool! dost think I could endure to plung my sword in throat of thine, thou that nor among women nor amongst men hast any place? The reason I left the palace was to gag thy noisy tongue; for Argos is quickly roused once it hears a cry to the rescue. As for Menelaus, we are not afraid of meeting his swords with him; no! he may go upon his way proud of the golden ringlets on his shoulders; for if, to avenge the slaying of Helen, he gathers the Argives and leads them against the palace, refusing to accept the rescue of me, my sister and Pylades my fellow-conspirator, he shall have two corpses to behold, his daughter's as well as his wife's. *Exeunt* ORESTES *and the* PHRYGIAN *into the* ...

Ch. Ah fortune! fortune! again and yet again the house is entering on a fearful contest for the race of Atreus.

Semi-Ch. I. What are we to do? carry tidings to the town, or hold our peace?

Semi-Ch. II. It is safer to keep silence, friends.

Semi-Ch. I. Look, look at that sudden rush of smoke to the sky in front of the palace telling its tale in advance!

Semi-Ch. II. They are kindling torches to fire the halls of Tantalus; they do not shrink even from murder.

Ch. God holds the issue in his hand, to give to mortal men what end he will. Some mighty power is this; it was through a vengeful fiend that this family started on its career of murder, by reason of the hurling of Myrtilus from the chariot.

But lo! I see Menelaus approaching the palace in hot haste; no doubt he has heard what is happening here. (Calling inside) What ho! within there, descendants of Atreus, make haste and secure the doors with bars. A man in luck is a dangerous adversary for luckless wretches like thyself, Orestes. ORESTES *and* PYLADES *appear on the roof, holding* HERMIONE.

Enter MENELAUS

Men. Strange news of the violent deeds perpetrated by a pair of savages—men I do not call them—has brought me hither. What I heard was that my wife was not killed, but had vanished out of sight—an idle rumour doubtless, brought to me by some dupe of his own terror, a ruse perhaps of the matricide to turn the laugh against me.

Throw wide the palace doors! My orders to my servants are that they force the doors, that I may rescue my child at least from the hands of these murderers, and recover the corpse of my poor lost wife, whose slayers must die with her by my hand.

Or. (From the roof) Ho, fellow! Keep thy fingers off those bolts, thou Menelaus, who vauntest thyself so high; else will I tear off the coping, the work of masons, and shatter thy skull with this parapet. The doors are bolted and barred to prevent thy entrance to the palace and thy rescue of them within.

Men. Ha! what now? I see a blaze of torches and men standing at bay on the house top yonder with a sword held at my daughter's throat.

Or. Wouldst question me or hear me speak?

Men. Neither; but I suppose I *must* hear thee.

Or. Well, if thou art anxious to know, I intend to slay thy daughter.

Men. After slaying Helen, art thou bent on adding another murder?

Or. I would I had compassed that, instead of being duped by the gods!

Men. Dost thou deny having slain her, saying this out of wanton insult?

Or. Yes, I do deny it to my sorrow. Would God—

Men. Would God—what? Thou provokest my fears.

Or. I had hurled to Hades the pollution of Hellas!

Men. Surrender my wife's dead body, that I may bury her.

Or. Ask the gods for her; but thy daughter I will slay.

Men. This matricide is bent on adding murder to murder.

Or. This champion of his sire, betrayed by thee to death.

Men. Art thou not content with the stain of thy mother's blood which is on thee?

Or. I should not grow tired if I had these wicked women to slay for ever.

Men. Art thou too, Pylades, a partner in this bloody work?

Or. His silence says he is; so my saying it will suffice.

Men. Not without thy rueing it, unless thou take wings and fly.

Or. Fly we never will, but will fire the palace.

Men. What! wilt thou destroy the home of thy ancestors?

Or. To prevent thee getting it I will, offering this maid in sacrifice upon its flames.

Men. Kill her; for thou wilt be punished by me for such a murder.

Or. Agreed.

Men. No, no! refrain!

Or. Silence! thy sufferings are just; endure them.

Men. Pray, is it just that thou shouldst live?

Or. And rule a kingdom, yes.

Men. A kingdom—where?

Or. Here in Pelasgian Argos.

Men. Thou art so well qualified to handle sacred water!

Or. And pray, why not?

Men. And to slay victims before battle!

Or. Well, art thou?

Men. Yes, my hands are clean.

Or. But not thy heart.

Men. Who would speak to thee?

Or. Every man that loves his father.

Men. And the man who honours his mother?

Or. He's a happy man.

Men. Thou didst not honour thine at any rate.

Or. No, for I delight not in your wicked women.

Men Remove that sword from my daughter s throat

Or Thou art wrong

Men What! wilt slay her?

Or Right once more

Men Ah me! what can I do?

Or Go to the Argives and persuade them—

Men To what?

Or Entreat the city that we may not die

Men Otherwise will ye slay my child?

Or That is the alternative

Men Alas for thee Helen!

Or And is it not alas! for me?

Men I brought her back from Troy only for thee to butcher

Or Would I had!

Men After troubles innumerable

Or Except where I was concerned

Men Dreadful treatment mine!

Or The reason being thy refusal to help me then?

Men Thou hast me there

Or Thy own cowardice has (*Calling from the roof to* ELECTRA) *Ho there! fire the palace from beneath* Electra and Pylades my trusty friend kindle the parapet of yonder walls (*The palace is seen to be abla e*)

Men Help help ye Danai! gird on your harness and come ye dwellers in knightly Argos! for here is a fellow trying to wrest his life from your whole city though he has caused pollution by shedding his mother s blood

APOLLO *appears in the clouds with* HELEN

Apollo Menelaus calm thy excited mood I am Phœbus th son of Latona who draw nigh to call thee by name and thou no less Orestes who sword in hand art keeping guard on yonder maid that thou mayst hear what I have come to say Helen whom all thy eagerness failed to destroy when thou wert seeking to anger Menelaus is here as ye see in the enfolding air rescued from d ath instead of slain by thee Twas I that saved her and snatched her from beneath thy sword at the bidding of her father Zeus for sh his child must put on immortality and take her place with Castor and Polydeuces in the bosom of the sky a saviour to mariners Choose thee then another bride and take her to thy home for the gods by means of Helen s loveliness embroiled Troy and Hellas causing death thereby that they might lighten mother Earth of the outrage done her by man s excessive population Such is Helen s end

But as for thee Orestes thou must cross the frontier of this land and dwell for one whole year on Parrhasian soil which from thy flight thither shall be called the land of Orestes by Azanians and Arcadians and when thou returnest thence to th city of Athens submit to be brought to trial by the Avenging Three for thy mother s murder for the gods will be umpires between you and will pass a most righteous sentence on thee upon the hill of Ares where thou art to win thy case. Likewise it is ordained Orestes that thou shalt wed Hermione at whose neck thou art pointing thy sword Neoptolemus shall never marry her thou h he thinks he will for his death is fated to o ertake him by a Delphian sword when he claims satisfaction of me for the death of his father Achilles [1] Bestow thy sister s hand on Pylades to whom thou didst formerly promise her the life awaiting him henceforth is one of bliss

Menelaus leave Orestes to rule Argos go thou and reign o er Sparta keeping it as the dowry of a wife who till this day ne er ceased exposing thee to toils innumerable Between Orestes and the citizens I who forced his mother s murder on him will bring about a reconciliation

Or Hail to thee prophetic Loxias for these thy utterances! Thou art not a lying prophet after all but a true seer and yet there cam a dreadful thought into my heart that it was some fiend I had *listened to when I seemed to hear thy voice* but all is ending well and I obey thy word There! I release Hermione from a violent death and a ree to make her my wife whenever her father gives consent

Men All hail Helen daughter of Zeus! I wish thee joy of thy home in heaven s happy courts

To thee *Orestes* I betroth my daughter according to the word of Phœbus and good luck attend thee a noble wooer nobly wived and me the parent of thy bride!

Ap Repair each one of you to the place appointed by me reconcile all strife

Men Obedience is a duty

Or I think so too Menelaus so here I make a truce with sorrow and with thy oracles O Loxias.

Ap Go your ways and honour Peace most fair of goddesses I meantime will escort Helen to the mansions of Zeus soon as I reach the star lit firmament There seated side by side with Hera and Hebe the bride of Heracles she shall be honoured by men with drink offerings as a goddess for ever sharing with those Zeus born sons of Tyndareus their empire o er the sea for the good of mariners

Ch Hail! majestic Victory still in thy keeping hold my life and ne er withhold the crown!

Exeunt OMNES

[1] Cf *Andromache* ll. 1085 *seq*

IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURI

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

IPHIGENIA	HERDSMAN
ORESTES	THOAS, *King of the Tauri*
PYLADES	MESSENGER
CHORUS OF CAPTIVE WOMEN *from Hellas*	ATHENA

On the sea shore in the Tauric Chersonese near a temple of Artemis. Enter IPHIGENIA.

Iphigenia Pelops, the son of Tantalus, came to Pisa with swift steeds and won his bride, the daughter of Œnomaus, who bare Atreus to him. Atreus had issue Menelaus and Agamemnon, and I am Agamemnon's child, Iphigenia, by the daughter of Tyndareus, the maid whom my sire thought he sacrificed to Artemis for the sake of Helen in the famous bay of Aulis, hard by the eddies which Euripus running ever to and fro before the changing breeze as he rolls along his deep dark wave; for there it was that king Agamemnon gathered a fleet of a thousand ships from Hellas, wishing his Achæans to win the fair crown of victory over Ilium and avenge the outrage offered to Helen's marriage, yea, all for the sake of Menelaus. But when, owing to foul weather he could not get a favouring wind, he had recourse to the diviner's flame, and this was what Calchas told him: "O Agamemnon, captain of this host of Hellas, no chance hast thou of unmooring thy ships, till Artemis has received thy daughter Iphigenia in sacrifice; for thou didst vow to offer to the goddess of light the fairest thing the year produced. Now thy wife Clytemnestra has given birth to a daughter in thy house whom thou must sacrifice, ascribing to me the title of fairest;" and by the arts of Odysseus they took me from my mother's side on the pretext of wedding me to Achilles; but, when I reached Aulis, I was seized, poor maid, and lifted high above the pyre. I saw the sword in act to strike, when Artemis stole me out of the Achæans' hands, leaving a hind in my place, and she carried me through the radiant air and set me to dwell here in the land of the Tauri, where a barbarian is king over barbarians, even Thoas, whose name is due to his fleetness, for swift as a bird on the wing he speeds his course. He made me priestess in the temple here and so it is that in accordance with the observances of a festival in which the goddess Artemis delights, its only fair name—but I say no more from fear of that deity—for I sacrifice each son of Hellas who touches at these shores, this being the custom in the city even before I came. I begin the rite, but the actual act of slaughter belongs to others inside the shrine of the goddess.

Strange visions the past night brought me, which I will tell to the air, if there is really any help in that. As I slept, methought I had escaped this land and was once more in Argos, sleeping in the midst of my maidens, when lo! the surface of the ground was shaken by an earthquake, whereat I fled, and, standing outside the house, I saw its coping falling and the whole building dashed in ruin from roof to base. Only one column, methought, of my father's halls was left standing, and from its capital it let stream the auburn hair and took a human tongue, and I, observant of the murderous craft I practise against strangers, began sprinkling it, as it had been a victim, weeping the while.

Now this is my interpretation of the dream. Orestes is dead; 'twas for him I began the rites; for sons are the pillars of a house, and death is the lot of all whom once my lustral waters sprinkle. Again, I cannot fix the dream upon my friends, for Strophius had no son at the time I was called to die. Now therefore I mean to pour a drink-offering to my brother who is far from me here, for this I can do, with the help of the maidens from Hellas whom the king has given me as attendants. But wherefore are they not yet here? I will enter the courts of the goddess's temple where I dwell. *Exit* IPHIGENIA.

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Orestes (*Entering cautiously*) Take care and see whether there is any one in the road.

Pylades I am doing so, keeping a careful look-out in every direction.

Or Thinkest thou, Pylades, this is the abode of the goddess towards which we steered our sea-borne barque from Argos?

Py I think it is, Orestes, and thou must share my opinion.

Or And is that the altar o'er which the blood of Hellenes trickles?

Py Its edges at any rate are discoloured with blood-stains.

Or Dost see a string of spoils just beneath the cornice?

Py Aye, trophies of strangers who have been murdered.

Or Well, we must cast our eyes all round and keep a good look-out.

Ah, Phœbus! why have thy oracles brought me

Men Remove that sword from my daughter s throat

Or Thou art wrong

Men What! wilt slay her?

Or Right once more

Men Ah me! what can I do?

Or Go to the Argives and persuade them—

Men To what?

Or Entreat the city that we may not die

Men Otherwise will ye slay my child?

Or That is the alternative

Men Alas for thee Helen!

Or And is it not alas! for me?

Men I brought her back from Troy only for thee to butcher

Or Would I had!

Men After troubles innumerable

Or Except where I was concerned

Men Dreadful treatment mine!

Or The reason being thy refusal to help me then?

Men Thou hast me there

Or Thy own cowardice has (*Calling from the roof to* ELECTRA) Ho there! fire the palace from beneath Electra and Pylades my trusty friend kindle the parapet of yonder walls (*The palace is seen to be ablaze*)

Men Help help ye Danai! gird on your harness and come ye dwellers in knightly Argos! for here is a fellow trying to wrest his life from your whole city though he has caused pollution by shedding his mother s blood

APOLLO *appears in the clouds with* HELEN

Apollo Menelaus calm thy excited mood I am Phœbus the son of Latona who draw nigh to call thee by name and thou no less Orestes who sword in hand art keeping guard on yonder maid that thou mayst hear what I have come to say Helen whom all thy eagerness failed to destroy when thou wert seeking to anger Menelaus is here as ye see in the enfolding air rescued from death instead of slain by thee Twas I that saved her and snatched her from beneath thy sword at the bidding of her father Zeus for she his child must put on immortality and take her place with Castor and Polydeuces in the bosom of the sky a saviour to mariners Choose thee then another bride and take her to thy home for the gods by means of Helen s loveliness embroiled Troy and Hellas causing death thereby that they might lighten mother Earth of the outrage done her by man s excessive population Such is Helen s end

But as for thee Orestes thou must cross the frontier of this land and dwell for one whole year on Parrhasian soil which from thy flight thither shall be called the land of Orestes by Azanians and Arcadians and when thou returnest thence to the city of Athens submit to be brought to trial by the Avenging Three for thy mother s murder for the gods will be umpires between you and will pass a most righteous sentence on thee upon the hill of Ares where thou art to win thy case Likewise it is ordained Orestes that thou shalt wed Hermione at whose neck thou art pointing thy sword Neoptolemus shall never marry her though he thinks he will for his death is fated to overtake him by a Delphian sword when he claims satisfaction of me for the death of his father Achilles [1] Bestow thy sister s hand on Pylades to whom thou didst formerly promise her the life awaiting him henceforth is one of bliss

Menelaus leave Orestes to rule Argos go thou and reign o er Sparta keeping it as the dowry of a wife who till this day ne er ceased exposing thee to toils innumerable Between Orestes and the citizens I who forced his mother s murder on him will bring about a reconciliation

Or Hail to thee prophetic Loxias for these thy utterances! Thou art not a lying prophet after all but a true seer and yet there came a dreadful thought into my heart that it was some fiend I had listened to when I seemed to hear thy voice but all is ending well and I obey thy word There! I release Hermione from a violent death and agree to make her my wife whenever her father gives consent

Men All hail Helen daughter of Zeus! I wish thee joy of thy home in heaven s happy courts

To thee Orestes I betroth my daughter according to the word of Phœbus and good luck attend thee a noble wooer nobly wived and me the parent of thy bride!

Ap Repair each one of you to the place appointed by me reconcile all strife

Men Obedience is a duty

Or I think so too Menelaus so here I make a truce with sorrow and with thy oracles O Loxias

Ap Go your ways and honour Peace most fair of goddesses I meantime will escort Helen to the mansions of Zeus soon as I reach the star lit firmament There seated side by side with Hera and Hebe the bride of Heracles she shall be honoured by men with drink offerings as a goddess for ever sharing with those Zeus born sons of Tyndareus their empire o er the sea for the good of mariners

Ch Hail! majestic Victory still in thy keeping hold my life and ne er withhold the crown!

Exeunt OMNES

[1] Cf *Andromache* ll 1085 *seq*

tre. Of them I am not thinking now but I weep for my brother dead in Argos, eve for Orestes the heir to the Arg e throne whom I left a babe un weaned, an nfant in his mother s arms still hanging at her breast

Ch Beh ld, a herdsman is come from the beach to bring thee tidings.

Enter HE DSMAN

Herdsman Daughter of Agamemnon and Cl taem nestra hea ken to the news I ha e to t ll.

Ip Why what is here to i terrupt our present con ersat on?

H Two youths, escaping on a ship ha reached the misty coast of the Symplegades, a gra eful sa rifi e for thee to ff r to the goddess Artemis. Haste then to make ad ready the lustral water and the openi g rites.

Ip Whence com they? what is the name of these stra gers country?

H Th y are from H llas that said I know noth g f rther

Ip Did st thou not even catch th stran ers names, so that thou canst tell m ?

H Pylades one called the othe

Ip And the strang r s comr de what was his nam ?

He That n one knows for we never heard t

Ip Where were y when ye saw and captured them?

H Upon the extreme edg of th cheerless sea.

Ip Pray what were herdsmen doing by the sea?

H We had gone to wash our cattl in its briny spray

I Return to that other point wh r did ye tak them, and how? for this i what I wish to know

Tis lo n e strangers came and our goddess alt has ot been crimso ed all that hile w th t eams of H llen blood

H W w e just driving our cattle from their oodland pa tures to yonder sea which flows be t een the Clashing Rocks, wher is a certa n hol low cleft sc oped by the ush of the tide a h lter used by pu pl fishers, when a herd man of our com pa saw tw oung me and, coming back to us on tiptoe h said. Do ye not se them? th e deities seated onder Then one of us, a god fearing man, lifted up hi hand nd, looking tow rds them pra ed th s Lord Palaemon son of th nymph Leucothea, hose keeping a all ships, ha e m cy on us! wh ther twain ow seated on the bea h ar th T B thren or darli s of father Nereus, ho begot hat l ly choi f fifty N reids.

But nothe ith a reckless di ega d of what is h t scoffed t his p ayers and ould ha it that they were sh pw ecked marin rs shelt g in the g for fear f our custom, ha hea d how we sa ri e stranger in this la d

Now most of us, thinki g he was right determi ed to h t hem for the goddess, t t m such as our cou t y ffe s. Mea time one f the t o strangers, lea g th ocky ca e suddenl tood stil nd fell t shaking his head wildl p and down and g oan

i g loudly trembling to his very fingertips in a f enzied fit and shoutin like a hunter There! Py lades dost see her? there! dost see her now the hell ish snake, how eage she is for my blood with her fearsome vipers ll agape to bite me? and yet a third who belches fire and death wings her way to a rocky hei ht w th my mother in h r arms, to hurl her the ce upon me Oh horror! she will kill me where am I to fly?

We could not see these weird shapes, but he mis took th low n of cows and the barking of dogs for th sounds which he said the fiends were uttering in imitation of them Now we were sitting huddled to ether in silence, as doomed men when lo! he drew his swo d nd ru hing like a lion into the midst of the heif rs, fell to slashing at their flanks and plunging his sword in their sides, thinkin he was thus ward n off the engeful goddesses, so that the surfac of the sea brok out n clots of gore We meant me, seeing our cattle harmed and slain began to arm us one and all, blowing the while on curved shells and callin the people of the place together and very soon we were gathered in full force but then tl e stranger left his sudden fit and foaming at the mouth he falls we seeing him fallen so op portunely set t each man of us, to hurl and smite at him, b t the other of that pair wiped th foam from his lips nd was ca eful of his body holdin out his finely woven rob to co er him, watching anxiously for threatened wounds and min stering to his friend most tenderly Suddenly the mad man eco ering his senses spran up from where he fell and wa wa e of the surging press of foes and of the nearness of that calam ty wh ch is upon them now and he gave one g oan b t we the while ne r ceased pelting them from every side with right goodwill wh eon we heard this fearful o der gi en, "Pylades, we ha e to die see that t be w th honou draw thy swo d nd follow me.

B t when w saw the brand shed blades of our two enem es, we took to flight and were filling th ocky gl ns stil, if one or two did fly tl e rest k pt up a igorou fire at them, and if perchance they d ove these off the part which was giving way at first set t stoning them again Th sou ds ncred ible but not a man of all the crowd that threw suc eeded in hitt ng the goddess s ctims. At la t how ev we mastered them—n t by bra ery us true— but s rounding tl em compl tely we contri d to knock the swords from their hands with stones, and they sa k to th ground through fa gue at once we bring them to ou monarch who no sooner sees them than he despatches them to thee to purify and sacrifice Be thy prayer maiden, that such strangers m be forthcomin fo thy offering go on slayin men lik these and Hellas will make atonement for thy own blood expiating that sacrifice in Aulis.

Ch A strange story thou tellest about this waif, whoever he is, that is come from the land of Hellas to the cheerless sea.

Ip Enou h! go, brin th strangers hither while I will see to what is needed here. *Exit* HERDSMA

once more into this strait after I had avenged the blood of my sire by slaying my mother? An exile from hearth and home I was persecuted by relays of avenging fiends completing many a lengthy course So I went and questioned thee how to find an end to the whirling *madness and distress* I was enduring in ranging up and down through Hellas and thy answer was that I should seek the confines of the Taurian land where Artemis thy sister has her altars and take from thence an image of the *goddess which fell from heaven* so men say into her temple there then when I had secured it by craft or luck maybe when every risk was run I was to present it to the land of Athens Beyond this naught was said that done I was to have relief from trouble So in obedience to thy bidding I have come hither to a strange and cheerless shore

Now Pylades as my partner in this hard emprise I ask thee what are we to do? for thou seest the height of these encircling walls Shall we mount the steps leading to the building? how then escape detection? or can we force the brazen bolts with levers when we know nothing about them? If we are caught trying to open the doors or plotting an entrance we shall be slain ere that let us escape upon our ship wherein we sailed hither

Py Flight is intolerable we are not used to it and the god s oracle must not be slighted but let us quit the temple and hide ourselves in some cavern *washed by the sea s black tide apart from our ship* lest some one see it and tell the rulers and we be then seized by force But when the eye of darksome night appears we must even dare to take the polished image from the shrine bringing all our craft to bear on it Look there between the rafters where an empty space is left by which to lower oneself Tis well the brave can face hardship but cowards are never of any account What! shall we after toiling at the oar so long and far turn back again and leave the goal?

Or Well said! obedience is my cue We must find some spot where we can both hide ourselves out of sight for assuredly the god will not be the cause of his own oracle falling fruitless to the ground courage is all that is required for the young have no excuse for shirking toil

Exeunt ORESTES *and* PYLADES
Enter IPHIGENIA *and* CHORUS

Chorus Hush! a solemn silence! ye dwellers on the double clashing rocks that guard the Euxine sea!

All hail Latona s child Dictynna goddess of the hills! to thy court I guide my steps in maiden saintliness to thy gilded dome with beauteous colonnades to wait on her that keeps thy keys in holy trust bidding farewell for this to the embattled walls of Hellas the land of horses to Eurotas with its meadows mid the trees where stood my father s house

I am here what news? why so thoughtful? wherefore hast thou summoned me to the temple? O daughter of him who sought the towers of Troy with the famous fleet of a thousand ships and their crews of countless warriors gathered by the noble sons of Atreus!

Ip My handmaids ye find me busied with most woful dirges dismal strains never uttered by the Muse as I mourn a kinsman dead ah me! for this is *the trouble that has befallen me I am weeping for* my brother reft of life so sure the vision I beheld in the darkness of the night just past

Undone! undone! Ah me! my father s house is now no more our race is dead and gone Woe! woe for the troubles in Argos! Out on thee destiny! that robbest me of my only brother sending him to Hades for him I am about to pour this offering on the lap of earth a cup for the departed dead—milk of mountain roving kine a draught of Bacchus own drink and what the russet bees have garnered by their toil—the soothing gift which custom gives the dead

(*To a servant*) Hand me the solid urn of gold the death god s drink offering

Scion of Agamemnon s line beneath the earth! to thee as dead I send these gifts accept them thus for I shall never bring thee at thy tomb my golden locks or tears for very far I dwell from the land of our fathers where *men thought* this luckless maiden died beneath the knife

Ch Lady to thee will I now pour out an answering strain an eastern dirge that wails in foreign key a litany of woe chanted o er the dead in mourning *a song of Hades singing wherein the pæan plays* no part

Woe for the royal house of the Atridæ! its light is quenched Woe for their ancestral home! Who of all the prosperous kings in Argos shall rule o er it? *Trouble born of trouble darteth on it and the sun* god with winged careering steeds turned from his place and changed his light divine Woe on woe and death on death with anguish unto anguish added has come upon this house all for a golden lamb from this source vengeance made its way into the family for those who were slain before of the race of Tantalus while against thee Fate is eager in the pursuit of mischief

Ip Bitter to me from the very first the fate of my mother s marriage from the first on that night I was conceived the goddesses who rule men s destiny strove to make my childhood hard I was the first fair babe she bore in her marriage bower that hapless daughter of Leda whom all Hellas wooed born and reared by her to be the victim of my father s despite a joyless offering when to pay his vow they brought me in a chariot drawn by steeds and set me on the strand of Aulis to be the bride—ah! bride of sorrow—to the Nereid s son But now beside the ruthless sea I make my cheerless home an alien torn from home and friends with none to call me wife or mother never singing Hera s praise my queen in Argos nor mid the merry whirr of looms broidering with the shuttle a picture of Athenian Pallas and the Titans but staining altars instead with the streaming blood of doomed strangers, whose moans and tears are piteous, no theme for minstrel's

rescue for he makes two evils out of one he lets himself be called a fool and all the same he dies he should let his fortune be Weep not thou for us, for well know what rites are offered here

Ip Which of you bears the name of Pylades, as they called there? This is what I wish to learn first.

Or This is he, if the knowledge really gives thee any pleasure

I What state in Hellas calls him son?

Or What canst thou gain by learning this, lady?

I Are ye brothers, the sons of one mother?

Or Brothers in friendship not in blood

I What name did the author of thy being give thee?

Or I might with justice be called Misfortune

Ip That is not what I ask; refer that to chance

Or If I die nameless, I shall not be mocked

Ip Why grudge me this? Art so exceeding proud?

Or 'Tis my body not my name, that thou wilt sacrifice

Ip Wilt thou not even tell me the name of thy city?

Or No, for thy inquiry boots me not seeing I am doomed to die

I What hinders thee from granting me this boon?

Or Glorious Argos is my home I own it with pride

Ip What! Argos? wert thou really born there sir stranger?

Or Ay in Mycenæ, so prosperous of yore

I Wast thou an exile or from what mischance that thou didst quit thy country?

Or An exile I am in a certain sense, not of mine own free will or yet against it

Ip And yet thy coming from Argos was welcome to me

Or Not so to myself, but if thou art pleased see to that thyself.

I Wilt tell me something that I wish to learn myself?

Or To serve as an appendix to my misery!

Ip Maybe thou hast some knowledge of Troy which is spoken of everywhere

Or Would God I knew it not so much as in a dream!

Ip They say that it is now no more a city sacked

Or Why so it is as thou heard right

Ip Did Helen return to the house of Menelaus?

Or Ay that she did to the sorrow of one I loved.

Ip Where is she now? I too owe her a grudge

Or She is living in Sparta with her first husband

Ip O hated creature! not in the eyes of Hellenes, not in mine alone!

Or I too have reaped some fruit of that woman's marriages

I Did the Achæans make good their return as is rumoured?

Or Thy question embraces everything at once

I I would fain get an answer to it before thy death.

Or Put thy questions, since thou art bent on it I will answer

Ip There was a seer Calchas—did he return from Troy?

Or He was reported dead in Mycenæ

Ip Great queen! how well deserved! What of Laertes' son?

Or He has not yet returned but 'tis said he is still alive

I Perdition seize him! ne'er may he reach home again!

Or Spare thy curses dire affliction is his lot

I Is the son of Thetis the Nereid still living?

Or No dead his marriage at Aulis came to naught.

Ip Aye 'twas all a trick at least they who suffered by it say so

Or Who art thou? thy questions touching Hellas are so apt

Ip I am from Hellas but when a child I lost that home.

Or Then art thou right lady to long for news of it

Ip What of that general whom men style the blest?

Or Who is that? The man of whom *I* wot is not among the blest

Ip A prince called Agamemnon said to be the son of Atreus.

Or I knew him not leave this theme, lady

Ip I do entreat thee no! but speak, fair sir to gladden me

Or He is dead poor king! and has caused another's death as well.

Ip Dead how? what befell him? woe is me!

Or Why that heavy sigh Was he related to thee?

Ip 'Tis for his former prosperity I grieve.

Or And rightly too, for he came to a fearful end at a woman's hand

Ip O the piteous fate of that murderess and her victim!

Or Prithee cease and ask no more

Ip Only this is the wretched victim's wife alive?

Or No, dead her son—the child she bore—he slew her

Ip O house sore troubled! What could be his object?

Or Vengeance on her for his father's death

Ip Alas for him! how well he exacted his evil just

O Spite of his justice he has no luck at Heaven's hand

Ip Did Agamemnon leave any other issue in his halls?

Or Yes, one maiden child Electra

Ip What! is no mention made of a daughter who was sacrificed?

Or No, none except that she has closed her eyes upon the light

Ip Ah woe's her and him that slew her her own sire!

Or In a thankless cause she died—the cause of a wicked woman

Ip Is the son of the murdered man still alive at Argos?

Alas my suffering heart! in days gone by thou wert always kind and compassionate towards strangers paying their kindred race the tribute of a tear whenever thou hadst Hellenes in thy power but now by reason of dreams which have made me cruel from thinking that Orestes is no longer alive ye will find my heart hardened whoe er ye are that have arrived So then this also is a true saying friends and I experience it The unfortunate having once known prosperity themselves bear no kind feelings towards their luckier neighbours

No breeze from Zeus hath ever blown nor vessel sailed which might have carried Helen hither from her course between the clashing rocks —Helen my bane and Menelaus with her—that so I might have taken vengeance on them putting Aulis here to balance Aulis there where Danaid chiefs with brutal violence were for slaughtering me like a heifer my own father being the priest

Oh! I can never forget that hideous scene the many times I strained my hands to touch his beard and how I clung to my father s knees and cried Tis to a sorry wedding I am brought by thee my sire e en now while thou art slaying me my mother and the Argive maids are singing my marriage hymn and our house is filled with music but I am dying all the time slain by thee Hades it seems and not the son of Peleus was the Achilles thou didst offer me as lord having brought me in thy chariot to a bloody wedding by a trick A fine spun veil was o er my eyes so I never took my brother in my arms—that brother now no more—nor kissed my sister on the lips from modesty as if it were for Peleus halls that I was bound but many a fond caress I kept in store for the future believing I should yet return to Argos

Ah! Orestes woe is thee! if thou art dead from what a glorious lot and envied heritage art thou cut off! I blame these subtle quibbles of our goddess say a man has spilt another s blood or even come in contact with a labouring woman or a corpse she bars him from her altars counting him unclean and yet herself delights in human sacrifice It cannot be that Leto, bride of Zeus ever bore so senseless a daughter No! for my part I put no credit in that banquet served by Tantalus to the gods to believe that they felt pleasure in devouring a child rather I suspect that the natives of this land being cannibals themselves impute this failing to their deity for I cannot believe that any god is such a sinner

Exit

Ch Ye dim dark rocks where meet the seas o er whose forbidding billows Io crossed driven from Argos by the winged gad fly passing from Europe to the strand of Asia! who can these be that left the fair waters of Eurotas with green beds of reeds or Dirce s holy streams to tread this savage soil where the daughter of Zeus bedews her altars and columned fanes with blood of men? Can they have sped a chariot of the deep across the waves with oars of pine dashed in on either side before the breeze that fills the sail heaping up riches for their homes in eager rivalry? for hope fond hope appears to man s undoing insatiate in the hearts of those who carry home a load of wealth wanderers they across the main visitors to foreign towns in idle expectation Some there are whose thoughts of wealth are not timed right and some who find it come to them

How did they pass those clashing rocks or the restless beach of Phineus racing along the sea beat strand o er the breakers of Ocean s queen before the breeze that filled their sails to the land where choirs of fifty Nereid maids circle in the dance and sing—the rudder steady at the stern and whistling to the breath of south west wind or zephyr on to that gleaming strand where fowls in plenty roost to the fair race course of Achilles along the cheerless sea?

Oh! that chance would bring Helen the darling child of Leda hither on her way from Troy town as my lady prayed that she might have the fatal water sprinkled round her hair and die by my mistress knife paying to her a proper recompense!

What joy to hear the welcome news that some mariner from Hellas had landed here to end the sufferings of my bitter bondage! Oh! to set foot if only in a dream in my father s home and city a luxury sweet sleep affords a pleasure shared by us with wealth!

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES *guarded*

But see where the prisoners twain approach their hands fast bound with chains new victims for our goddess Silence now my friends! for those choice offerings from Hellas are now close to the temple, and it was no false news the herdsman announced

Thou awful queen! if by such acts this city wins thy favour accept its sacrifice not sanctioned by Hellenes though openly offered by our custom

Enter IPHIGENIA

Ip Ah well! my first thought must be the due performance of the goddess s service

Loose the hands of the strangers they are now devoted and must not be chained then enter the temple and make ready whatever present need requires or custom ordains (*Exit guards*)

(*Turning to the prisoners*) Ah! who was the mother that bare you? your father who was he? or your sister if haply ye had one? of what a gallant pair of brothers will she be bereft! Who knows on whom such strokes of fate will fall? for all that Heaven decrees proceeds unseen and no man knoweth of the ills in store for Fate misleads us into doubtful paths

Whence come ye hapless strangers? for long as ye have been in sailing hither so shall ye be long absent from your homes aye for ever in that world below

Or Woman whoe er thou art why weep st thou thus or why distress us at the thought of our impending doom? No wise man I count him who, when death looms near attempts to quell its terrors by piteous laments nor yet the man who bewails the Death god s arrival when he has no hope of

rescue for h makes two evils out of one he lets himself be cased a fool and al th same he dies he should let his f rtune be Weep not thou for us, for well we know what rites are offered here

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Or I mi ht with justice be called M fortu e

I That is not what I a k refer that t chance

Or If I d e nam less, I shal not be mocked.

I Wh wrud m this Art so exceedin proud

Or 'Tis my body not my name that thou w 't sacri ce

Ip Wilt thou not even tell me th name of thy cit

Or No, for th inquiry boots me not seei I am doomed to die

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I W't tell m som thin that I wish to learn m self

Or To serve as an appendix to m misery!

Ip Ma be thou hast some knowled e of Troy which is spoken of everywhere.

Or Would God I knew t not so much as in a dream!

Ip They sa that t is now no more a city sacked.

Or Why so t is ve heard ari ht

Ip Did H l n return to the house of Men laus

Or Aye that she did, to the sorrow f one I loved.

Ip Where is he now I too owe h s a grudge

Or Sh is li in n Sparta w th her first husband.

I O creatur hateful in the eyes of H llenes, not m me alone!

Or I too ha eaped some fruit of that woman s marriage.

I Did the Achaeans mak good their return as is rumoured?

Or Th question embraces everythin at once.

I I would fain get an answer to it before thy death.

Or Put thy questions, since thou art bent on it I will answer

Ip There was a seer Calchas—did he return from Troy?

Or H was reported dead in Mycenae.

Ip Great queen! how well deserved! What of Laertes son?

Or H has not yet returned, but tis said he is still alive.

I Perdition seize him ne er may he reach home again!

Or Spare thy curses dire affliction is h lot

I Is the son of Thetis the Nereid still li i ?

Or No, dead his marriage at Aulis came to na ht

I Aye twas al a trick at least they who suffered b it sa so.

Or Wh who art thou? thy ques ions touch g Hellas are so apt

I I am from Hellas but when a child, I lost that home

Or Then art thou ri ht lady to long for news of it.

I What of that general, whom men style "the blest"?

Or Who is that? The man of whom I wot is not amon the blest

I A prince called Agamemnon, said to be the son of Atreus.

Or I knew him not leave this theme lad

Ip I do treat thee no! but speak, fai sir to gladden me

Or H is dead, poor king! and has caused another s dea h as well.

I Dead wh what bef ll him? woe is me!

Or Why that bea i si h Was he related to thee?

I 'Tis for his former prosperity I grieve

Or And ri htly too, for he came to a fearful end at a woman s hands.

Ip O the piteous fat of that murderess and her victim!

Or Prithee cease and ask no more

I Onl this is the wretched v ctim s wif al e?

Or No, dead he son—the child sh bore—he slew her

Ip O house sore troubled! What could be his object?

Or Vengeance on her for his father s death.

I Alas for him how well he exacted his evil justice

Or Spite f his jus ice he has no luck at Hea en s hand

Ip Did Agamemnon lea e any other issue in his halls?

Or Yes, one maiden ch d Electra.

Ip What! is no mention made of a da hter who was sacrificed?

Or No, non except that she has closed her eyes upon the li ht.

Ip Ah, woe is her and him that s ew her his own sire!

Or In a thankless cause she died—the cause of a icked woman.

Ip Is the son of the murdered man still ali e a Argos?

Alas my suffering heart! in days gone by thou wert always kind and compassionate towards strangers paying their kindred race the tribute of a tear whenever thou hadst Hellenes in thy power but now by reason of dreams which have made me cruel from thinking that Orestes is no longer alive ye will find my heart hardened whoe er ye are that have arrived So then this also is a true saying friends and I experience it The unfortunate having once known prosperity themselves bear no kind feelings towards their luckier neighbours

No breeze from Zeus hath ever blown nor vessel sailed which might have carried Helen hither from her course between the clashing rocks —Helen my bane and Menelaus with her—that so I might have taken vengeance on them putting Aulis here to balance Aulis there where Danaid chiefs with brutal violence were for slaughtering me like a heifer my own father being the priest

Oh! I can never forget that hideous scene the many times I strained my hands to touch his beard and how I clung to my father s knees and cried

Tis to a sorry wedding I am brought by thee my sire e en now while thou art slaying me my mother and the Argive maids are singing my marriage hymn and our house is filled with music but I am dying all the time slain by thee Hades it seems and not the son of Peleus was the Achilles thou didst offer me as lord having brought me in thy chariot to a bloody wedding by a trick A fine spun veil was o er my eyes so I never took my brother in my arms—that brother now no more—nor kissed my sister on the lips from modesty as if it were for Peleus halls that I was bound but many a fond caress I kept in store for the future believing I should yet return to Argos

Ah! Orestes woe is thee! if thou art dead from what a glorious lot and envied heritage art thou cut off! I blame these subtle quibbles of our goddess say a man has spilt another s blood or even come in contact with a labouring woman or a corpse she bars him from her altars counting him unclean and yet herself delights in human sacrifice It cannot be that Leto bride of Zeus ever bore so senseless a daughter No! for my part I put no credit in that banquet served by Tantalus to the gods to believe that they felt pleasure in devouring a child rather I suspect that the natives of this land being cannibals themselves impute this failing to their deity for I cannot believe that any god is such a sinner

Exit

Ch Ye dim dark rocks where meet the seas o er whose forbidding billows Io crossed driven from Argos by the winged gad fly passing from Europe to the strand of Asia! who can these be that left the fair waters of Eurotas with green beds of reeds or Dirce s holy streams to tread this savage soil where the daughter of Zeus bedews her altars and columned fanes with blood of men? Can they have sped a chariot of the deep across the waves with oars of pine dashed in on either side before the breeze that fills the sail heaping up riches for their homes in eager rivalry? for hope fond hope appears to man s undoing insatiate in the hearts of those who carry home a load of wealth wanderers they across the main visitors to foreign towns in idle expectation Some there are whose thoughts of wealth are not timed right and some who find it come to them

How did they pass those clashing rocks or the restless beach of Phineus racing along the sea beat strand o er the breakers of Ocean s queen before the breeze that filled their sails to the land where *choirs of fifty Nereid maids circle in the dance and* sing—the rudder steady at the stern and whistling to the breath of south west wind or zephyr on to that gleaming strand where fowls in plenty roost to the fair race course of Achilles along the cheerless sea?

Oh! that chance would bring Helen the darling child of Leda hither on her way from Troy town *as my lady prayed that she might have the fatal water sprinkled round her hair and die by my mistress* knife paying to her a proper recompense!

What joy to hear the welcome news that some mariner from Hellas had landed here to end the sufferings of my bitter bondage! Oh! to set foot if only in a dream in my father s home and city a luxury sweet sleep affords a pleasure shared by us with wealth!

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES *guarded*

But see where the prisoners twain approach their hands fast bound with chains new victims for our goddess Silence now my friends! for those choice offerings from Hellas are now close to the temple and it was no false news the herdsman announced

Thou awful queen! if by such acts this city wins thy favour accept its sacrifice not sanctioned by Hellenes though openly offered by our custom

Enter IPHIGENIA

Ip Ah well! my first thought must be the due performance of the goddess s service

Loose the hands of the strangers they are now devoted and must not be chained then enter the temple and make ready whatever present need requires or custom ordains (*Exit guards*)

(*Turning to the prisoners*) Ah! who was the mother that bare you? your father who was he? or your sister if haply ye had one? of what a gallant pair of brothers will she be bereft! Who knows on whom such strokes of fate will fall? for all that Heaven decrees proceeds unseen and no man knoweth of the ills in store for Fate misleads us into doubtful paths

Whence come ye hapless strangers? for long as ye have been in sailing hither so shall ye be long absent from your homes aye for ever in that world below

Or Woman whoe er thou art why weep st thou thus or why distress us at the thought of our impending doom? No wise man I count him who, when death looms near attempts to quell its terrors by piteous laments nor yet the man who bewails the Death god s arrival when he has no hope of

death else shall I get a name for coward ce and knavery through Argos and in all the vales of Pho- c and the mob be g a host of kna es, w ll think that I betrayed thee and secured a return to my home only for myself or haply that I murdered hee, hue thy house was weak d sing destruc tion for thee w th a ew t thy throne as the hus band f thy s st r wh would succeed This then s hat I fear f this I am ashamed and it needs must be my bounden duty to b eathe my last with thee slain by the same k f and burnt the same p re as who was th f end and fears reproach

Or Hush! my own sorr ws I am bound to bear and I ll not doubl my burden of grief when I ma ca ry its ngl for that grief and foul reproach f hi h thou speakest t mine, if I slay thee my fellow toile for me fflicted as I am by Heaven, t not amiss to lea e this l fe but thou art prosper is a d thy home t pure of tai t and sound while mine is cursed alik by Hea en and destiny So sa e th self and g t children f my sist r whom I ga e thee to w fe thu will m ame l e o and my fa th r house w ll ne e be bl tt d out th ough ha ing no heir Go he ce nd li e make my fathe s house th home but wh n thou art c me to H llas and to chiv lrous A gos, I charge thee b th s right hand heap p m grave a d lay th reon memorials f me and let my sist r shed a tear and str w her tresses on my tomb and t ll h r how I pe shed by a A gi e ma de s hand consecrated at th alt r by bloodshed. Forsake not my ister wh n thou seest thy new kin nd my father s house forlor ard fare thee ll, my best of friends for so hav I e er loved thee fellow h nter foster broth r that oft hast bo n th b rden f m sorrows! 'Twas Phœ bus h decei ed us b his prophecies and so he has d sed a trick to d e m as far as *might* be from Hellas, for s shame f his h *gone oracles* for lter ld g up my all to h m and obey ng his word, even to the laying of my mothe I find my self ndo in return

Py A tomb shalt thou have my lu kless f end or ll I e er pro false to thy sister for Orestes dead will be n dear r t me than O *estes living* *Still* th god s oracl hath n t dest oyed thee et lbeit thou tandest now at the gates of death nay but mi fort n at h s worst som times admits a thorough cha ge

Or Cease the word f Phœbu no help to me for yonder comes the maid n f om th templ

Enter IPHIGENIA

I (*To the guard*) Hen l go h lp th ministers of death to make their prepar ti ns w thi

He is my lett ars, ith its man f ld-d lea es but listen to my further shes. A no man is th same nd ffl ct on a hen he has suddenly passed f om fea to confid nc I am m ch fraid that when h wh *to ca ry* the lette to Argos, is safely on h w from this land he will mak *my messa* f a out

Or What then would t tho ? what is t oubl ng thee?

Ip Let him give me an oath that he w ll convey th s writ ng to Argos to the friends I wish it to reach.

Or Wilt thou give him a similar oath in return?

Ip What to d ? from what refrain? tell me that

Or To let him go forth alive from this savage land

I Justly urged for how else could he carry my message?

Or But will the king agree to th s?

Ip Yes I will persuade him and will myself put thy friend aboard

Or Swear then (*to* PYL DES) and do thou dictate some solemn oath

Ip (T PYLAD s) Thou must promise to gi e this letter to my friends.

Py I w ll gi e th s letter to thy friends.

Ip And I will send thee safe beyond those sombre rocks.

Py By wh ch of the gods dost swear to this?

Ip By Artemis, in whose temple I hold my hon oured office

Py And I by Hea en s king majestic Zeus.

Ip Suppose thou fail to keep this oath to my in jury?

Py May I n er return! and thou—what if thou save me not?

Ip May I never live to set foot in Argos!

Py Pray hear me on a s bject we have *over* looked

Ip Well, tis not too late pro ided it be oppor tune

Py Grant me one e mption if ught happens to the sh p and the letter goes down w th the cargo in th wa es and I sa e only myself let th s oath be no lon er bind ng

Ip Dost know what I will d ? Much ad enture mu h a hie I will tell thee all that is written in th leaves f this letter so that thou mayst repeat it to my friend yes that insures its safety on the one hand suppose thou save the writi g the sil nt l es will of themselves tell its cont nts whereas, if what is written h re i lost at sea thy safety will invol e *the safety* of my message

Py A good p o ision for thy own nterests and me b t sion fy to whom I m t carry thi l tter to A gos and likewise the message I *must* repeat from thy lips.

Ip Go tell O estes the son of Agam mnon "Thy si t r Iph g nia the vict m of Aul s, send thee this message being st ll alive though dead to all in Ar gos.

Or Iph g nia still alive! where? she risen from the dead?

Ip I whom thine eyes behold, am sh distract me ot by speak g Bea me to Argos, b othe re I d m ve m from this sav ge land nd from the goddess sacrifices at which I am appointed to lay st a g rs.

Or Pylades, what am I t say? wh e can we be?

Ip Else will I become a cu se t thy house, O es- tes (*st pp ng t ad ess* PYLADES) thou hast heard the name twice to *impress* it on thee

Or Alive he is unhappy wretch and wandering without a home

Ip Begone ye lying dreams proved worthless after all!

Or Even the gods who at least bear the title of wise prove no less false than flitting dreams in things divine as well as human confusion reigns and tis only one cause of grief when a man through no folly of his own but from obeying the dictates of prophets is ruined as ruined he is in the judgment of those who know

Ch Ah well a day! and what is the fate of our dear fathers? are they still alive or dead? who can tell?

Ip Listen sirs for I have hit upon a plan I think to further your interests and my own at the same time and this is the best guarantee of success if all approve the same object Wouldst thou were I to spare thee return to Argos for me with a message to my friends there and carry them a letter written by a captive out of pity for me for he regarded not mine as the hand that slew him but held our custom answerable for his death such being the view our goddess takes of justice? For I had no one to return to Argos with my message and convey my letter to some friend of mine if spared but as thou seemest to be a man of no mean breeding and knowest Mycenæ and the persons I mean accept thyself the means of rescue earning a noble wage—thy safety for a scrap of writing but thy friend must be parted from thee and offered to the goddess for this is our city s stern decree

Or A fair proposal lady stranger save in one respect That he should have to bleed is a heavy weight upon my heart for tis I who steer this troubled craft he but sail with me to save my toil Wherefore it is not right that I should pleasure thee on terms that seal his doom while I escape myself from trouble No! be this the way give him the letter for he will convey it to Argos and so thy end is served but let who will slay me Foul shame were it for a man to plunge his friends into trouble and escape himself and this man is a friend whose life I prize as highly as my own

Ip Heroic spirit! what a noble stock was thine! how true thou art to friends! Oh may the last survivor of my race prove such another! for I too sirs am not left brotherless only I see him not

This being thy wish I will send him to carry the letter and thou shalt die but thy goodwill towards him must be something great!

Or But who will offer me and dare that awful deed?

Ip Myself for this is the office I hold of the goddess

Or A sad unenviable task fair maid

Ip But I am the slave of necessity whose law I must observe

Or Is this the hand—this woman s hand—that draws the knife on men?

Ip Not that but round thy brow I shall sprinkle lustral water

Or Who gives the fatal blow? if I may ask thee this

Ip Inside this building are men whose office this is.

Or What kind of tomb will await me when I am dead?

Ip The sacred fire within and a gaping chasm in the rock

Or Ah! would that a sister s hand could lay me out!

Ip An idle prayer poor wretch! whoever thou art for her home lies far from this savage shore Still as thou art an Argive I will not let thee want for aught that is in my power I will place in thy grave good store of ornament and quench thy charred remains with yellow olive oil and will pour upon thy pyre the nectar sucked from many a flower by russet mountain bees

I go now to fetch my letter from the goddess s temple yet regard not this ill will as mine

Watch them guards without binding them It may be I shall send unlooked for tidings to a friend in Argos even to him whom most I love and the letter announcing that they live whom he thinks dead will confirm the message of joy

Exit IPHIGENIA

Ch (*To* ORESTES) I weep for thee the victim of her fatal sprinkling

Or Nay there is nothing here for tears rather rejoice ye lady strangers

Ch (*To* PYLADES) I give thee joy young sir on thy happy fortune in that thou wilt tread thy native soil

Py No cause surely to envy a man when his friends are dying!

Ch Alas cruel mission!

Woe is thee! thy doom is sealed Ah! which of the pair is the more undone? My mind is still distraught with two fold doubt whether to mourn for thee or thee the more

Or Prithee Pylades art thou in like case with myself?

Py I know not thy question finds me with no answer ready

Or Who is this maid? How like a daughter of Hellas she questioned us of the toils at Troy and the Achæans return of Calchas the clever augur and famous Achilles! what pity she expressed for Agamemnon s fate and how she pressed me about his wife and children! This stranger maid is haply an Argive by descent else would she never have been sending a letter and inquiring so straitly about these matters as if she shared herself in the welfare of Argos

Py Thou hast forestalled me slightly but for all that thy conclusions are the same except on one point all of course who have ever had dealings with others hear about the misfortunes of kings But there was quite another theme she discussed

Or What was that? divulge it to me and thou mayest understand it better

Py It is shameful that I should live and thou be slain as I shared thy voyage so ought I to share thy

a deliverance from trouble for the two survivors of the house of Atreus?

Ch. This that I have seen with mine eyes, not merely heard men tell, may rank with miracles; 'tis stranger than fiction.

Py. Orestes, it is natural for friends to embrace each other when they meet; but thou must leave lamenting and face that other question as well, how we are to escape from this savage land with our safety honourably secured. For the wise man's way, when once he gets a chance, is not to indulge in pleasures foreign to it, or abandon his fortune.

Or. Thou art right; and fortune, I feel sure, is bent on helping our efforts here; for if a man exerts himself, the gods naturally have greater power.

Iph. (*To* PYLADES.) Thou shalt not stop me or prevent me from first inquiring how Electra fares; for any news of her will be welcome to me.

Or. Here is her husband (*pointing to* PYLADES), with whom she leads a happy life.

Iph. What is his country? who his sire?

Or. His father's name is Strophius, a Phocian.

Iph. Why then, he is the son of Atreus' daughter and my kinsman?

Or. Thy cousin, yes, my one loyal friend.

Iph. He was not born, when my father sought my life.

Or. No, for Strophius had no son for some time.

Iph. My sister's husband, hail!

Or. My saviour too, and no mere kinsman.

Iph. How didst thou bring thyself to that awful deed towards our mother?

Or. Let us say nothing of the deed; 'twas my vengeance for my sire.

Iph. What was her reason for slaying her husband?

Or. Forego our mother's story; 'tis no tale for thy ears.

Iph. I say no more; but does Argos now look up to thee?

Or. Menelaus is king, and I an exile from my country.

Iph. Surely our uncle never so insulted our afflicted house!

Or. No, but the fear of the avenging fiends drives me from the land.

Iph. Then that explains the story of thy madness even here upon the beach.

Or. This is not the first time I have been seen in my misery.

Iph. I understand; the goddesses were chasing thee on account of thy mother's murder.

Or. To put a blood-bridle in my mouth.

Iph. But why was it to this land thou didst guide thy steps?

Or. I came bidden by the oracle of Phoebus.

Iph. With what intent? Is it a secret or may it be told?

Or. I will tell thee. All my sorrows date from this: my mother's punishment—of which I say nothing—had devolved on me; I was chased into exile by vengeful fiends in hot pursuit, till Loxias at last guided my footsteps to Athens to make atonement to the unnamed goddesses; for there is there a holy tribunal, which Zeus set up one day to try Ares for some pollution, it is said. Now on my arrival at Athens, not one of my friends was ready to receive me at first, as a man abhorred by Heaven; afterwards they, who had pity on me, supplied me with stranger's cheer at a table apart, being in the same room with me, but by their silence they contrived to exclude me from conversation, that I might keep aloof from their eating and drinking; and filling each man's cup with the same measure of wine for all they were enjoying themselves. I meantime did not presume to question my hosts, but was sorrowing in silence and pretending *not to notice it*, though grieving bitterly that I was my mother's murderer. Moreover, I hear that amongst the Athenians my misfortunes have become the occasion for a festival, and the custom yet survives of the people of Pallas honouring the pitcher. But when I came to Ares' hill and stood my trial, I on one platform, the eldest of the vengeful fiends upon the other, Phoebus, having made his speech and heard the evidence about my mother's murder, saved me by his testimony; and Pallas, counting out the votes in her hand, made them equal for me; so I came off triumphant in the murder trial. Thereon as many of the avenging fiends as agreed with the verdict and were *for settling there* resolved to have a temple close to the tribunal; but such of them as concurred not with the precedent continued to persecute me in restless pursuit, till once again I sought the hallowed soil of Phoebus, and stretching myself starving before his shrine I swore to end my life then and there, unless he who had ruined me would find me salvation; whereupon the voice of Phoebus pealed from his golden tripod, and he sent me hither to fetch the image which fell from heaven, and set it up in Attica. Help me then to compass the means of safety he has appointed me; for if I can secure the image of the goddess, I shall not only cease from my mad fits, but setting out on well-rowed ship restore thee to Mycenae once again. Ah! my sister, well-beloved! preserve thy father's house and send me hence in safety; for I and the fortunes of Pelops' race are utterly undone, unless we secure the image of the goddess, that fell from heaven.

Ch. Some god's dread anger once burst forth against the seed of Tantalus, and it is leading them through trouble.

Iph. It was long my earnest wish, brother, even before thy coming, to be at Argos and see thee face to face; and my desire is thine, to set thee free from suffering and restore my father's stricken house, harbouring no angry thought towards him who would have slain me; for so should I be spared thy blood and save my house; but how am I to elude the goddess, and the king, when he finds the stone pedestal robbed of its image? That is my fear. How shall I escape death? what account can I give? If thou canst combine the act of carrying off the image and placing me upon thy gallant ship, the risk becomes worth running; but once I am separated from it, I am lost

Or Ye gods!

Ip Why invoke the gods in matters which only concern me?

Or 'Tis nothing; read on; my thoughts had strayed elsewhere. Perhaps if I question thee I shall arrive at the truth.

Ip Tell him, the goddess Artemis saved my life by substituting a hind in my stead which my father sacrificed, when he thought he plunged the sharp knife in me, and she put me to dwell in this land.

There is my message, and that is what is written in the letter.

Py How easy for me to observe the oath by which thou hast bound me! how fair thine own! I will make no long delay, but ratify what I have sworn.

There! Orestes, I bring this letter and deliver it to thee from this lady, thy sister.

Or I accept it, but letting its folded pages wait awhile I will first indulge my joy, not in mere words. (*Approaching to embrace* IPHIGENIA) My own dear sister! struck with wonder though I am, I yet will fold thee to my doubting heart and rejoice in my wondrous news.

Ch Thou hast no right, sir stranger, to pollute the handmaid of our goddess by throwing thy arms about her holy robes.

Or Oh! turn not from me, sister mine, sprung from Agamemnon like myself, now that thou hast found thy brother beyond all expectation.

Ip Found my brother in thee! A truce to this idle talk! Why, Argos and Nauplia are filled with his presence now.

Or That is not where he dwells, poor maid.

Ip Can thy mother have been a daughter of Spartan Tyndareus?

Or Yes; and my father a grandson of Pelops.

Ip What dost thou say? hast any proof to give me of this?

Or I have; ask me something about our father's home.

Ip Nay, 'tis surely for thee to speak, for me to answer.

Or Well, I will tell thee first a story I heard Electra tell. knowest thou ought of a quarrel 'twixt Atreus and Thyestes?

Ip I have heard that they fell out about a golden lamb.

Or Canst thou remember broidering this on the fine texture of thy web?

Ip Dearest brother! thou comest very near my heart.

Or Hast thou forgotten the picture on thy loom, the changing of the sun-god's course?

Ip That was the very pattern I embroidered with fine woven thread!

Or Next, didst thou receive the bridal bath sent by thy mother to Aulis?

Ip I have not forgotten; that marriage was not so happy as to take away the memory of it.

Or Once more, dost remember giving a lock of hair to be carried to thy mother?

Ip Aye, as a memorial of myself for my tomb in place of my body.

Or Next will I name as proofs what I have seen myself; the ancient spear of Pelops in our father's house, hidden away in thy maiden bower, that spear he brandished in his hand to slay Œnomaus and win Hippodamia, Pisa's prize.

Ip Orestes! O my brother dear, dearer than aught else to me, I hold thee in my arms, my best beloved, far from Argos, the home of our fathers.

Or And I hold thee, whom all thought dead; while tears, that are not tears of sorrow, with grief and joy commingling, bedew alike thy eyes and mine.

Ip I left thee in our halls a new-born babe still in thy nurse's arms that fatal day. O blest in fortune past all words to tell! What can I say? These things have come upon us transcending wonder or description.

Or May we be happy together for the future!

Ip Good friends, I feel a strange unwonted joy; my only fear is that he will fly from my arms and soar away into the air.

All hail! Cyclopean hearths and homes! my country, dear Mycenæ hail! I thank thee, yea, I thank thee both for life and bringing up, for that thou hast reared my brother from his youth to be a light unto our house.

Or Lucky in our birth, sister, were we, but our life has not proved so lucky in its haps.

Ip Ah me! how well I recollect the day when my wretched father held the sword-blade at my throat!

Or Horrible! I seem to see thee there, though I was not present.

Ip I remember, brother, being taken away by trickery, as if to wed Achilles; no marriage hymn was sung, but instead were tears and wailing at the altar. Woe for the water sprinkled on me there!

Or And I repeat, woe for our father's reckless deed!

Ip 'Twas no true father meted out that fate to me; and now one trouble is following on another—

Or Yes, if thou hadst slain thy brother, hapless maid.

Ip By some god's intervention. Oh! that I should have dared so dire a crime! Alas! brother, I ventured on a fearful deed; thou didst but just escape an unholy doom, death at my hands. How will the matter end? what will be my fate? what means can I discover to convey thee hence from this murderous land to thy home in Argos, before the sword requires thy blood? Ah suffering soul! 'tis thy business to devise a means for this. Wilt thou fly by land, not on shipboard, relying on thy speed of foot? Why, then thou wilt have death ever at thy elbow, as thou farest through savage tribes and over pathless ways; it must be the narrow passage 'twixt the misty rocks, after all, a tedious course for ships to run.

Ah me! a hapless lot is mine. What god or man or unforeseen event could bring about a happy release,

ful swans do serv ce to the Muse Woe! for the streams f tears that oursed adown m cheeks, what tim our turrets fell, and I the prey of oar and spear was set aboard a foeman s ship then, pur chased at costly price was carried to this foreign port wh re I min ster to the dau hter of Agamemnon priestess of the huntress queen, serv at al tars on which heep are ever sacrificed, and en y in her that hath been al ays unhappy for if a man born and b ed in hardships, h fainteth no under th m but happiness is subject to chang and to be affl cted fter prosperous days is a grievous lot for mortals.

Home the Arg e ship will bear thee lady and pie cin tes from mou tain Pan s wax fastened eed, will cheer the r ers to their ta and prophetic Phoebus will bring hi deep-toned l re with seven stri es nd escort thee with strai to fair bri ht Att ca. There wil dashin oa blades eed away le me s ll her and o er the bows of thy speedi bark th bree s will mak her can a sw ll against th foresta n th breez

Oh to tread yon dazzl track where th fiery sun goes ga th forth, oh when bo m chamber roo to rest the rated pinions on my ba k! Oh! to tak my station in the dance wher once at noble marriages I circled round in frien stri of charms th m compeers, and roused them t vie w th t e n h splendour of m dress, a I drew m broidered eil but t me and shaded m heek w th cl uster g curls.

Enter THO S

Tho Wher th warder of these ter ple gates, he maid of Hella Has he et begun th rites on he strangers as their bod es blaze in the hol hrine

Ch Here she is, O kin to ex lai ev rythi t thee.

Enter IPHIG A.

Th Ha da ht er f Agamemnon, wh art thou bear g on ma e f the goddes in thine arms from h sacred pedestal

I Sta there, O kin t th entrance.

Th What new now n th temple Iphigenia?

I A aunt! I sa (*turn g t THO s to explain*) t in pure ca se I utter tha word

Th What is thy news, *equ ring* su h a prefac ? F pla n.

Ip Th victims, sire, which ye had captured for me ar unclean.

Th What proof f th hast thou? or is it mer conjecture?

Ip The statu of the goddes turned way from t position.

Th Of ts own ccord or did an earthquak turn t?

Ip Of ts ow ccord and it losed t e es

Th What s th cause? the stran ers pollution?

Ip Yes that and nothing else the ha e m tted crime

Th Can they ha e slain on of my subjects on the beach?

Ip The brou ht the guilt of murd r with them —the guilt of kindred slain.

Th Who was their victim? I am desirous of learn ing

I 'Twas a mother s blood they spilt having con spired to stab her

Th O Apo l even among t barbar an none would ha e had th heart to do it

I They were hunted from every corner f H llas.

Th I this the reason thou art carry n the imag from the shrine?

I Yes, t remove it f om th ta nt of bloodshed by puri t be ea h t e holy firmament

Th I what way didst thou discover the impurit of these stra gers?

I When the ima e of the goddess turned away I questioned them.

Th Thou art a shrewd da hter f Hellas to ha e guessed this so cle erl

I Yea, and onl now they dan led befor me a temptin bait to catch m fancy

Th B bringi g news of those in Argos to lure thee

I Good news of Orestes, my only brother

Th No doubt to induce thee to spare them for their glad tidings.

I The said too that my father was ali e and well.

Th N turall thy escape was a reference to the claim of th goddess.

Ip Yes, f I hate all Hellas, that betra ed m

Th What pray are w to do with the strangers?

I We must piously observe the established cus t m

Th Is not the lustral water read nd thy kni fe?

I My purpose is t cleanse them fir t b purifi cat on.

Th In fresh sprin water or salt sea spray?

Ip The sea washes aw from man all that is ill

Th True th y would then be hol victims for th goddess.

I Yes, and this would suit my own news better

Th W ll d not the waves dash full upon the templ walls?

Ip Solitude is necessary for w ha e ther duties t pe f rm.

Th T ke them wh e th o w lt I have no w h to w tness what may not be told

Ip I must also p rify th im ge of the goddess.

Th Yes, f a y ta nt has m upon it fr m the matricides.

Ip H d th e bee n e I hould ne er ha e re mo ed it from its pedestal

Th Thy piet d f eth ght ar right

I Let me ha e the thi gs th u knowest I eq e

Th 'Tis for th t nam those wa ts.

Ip Load th tr g rs w th f tters

Th Whithe could they escape f m thee?

Ip Good faith is q ite u k w amo g Hellen es.

Th (*T h s sen nts*) A ay and bind them straight!

Ip Next let them brin the strangers forth.

although thou mayest succeed in thy enterprise and find a safe return not that I shrink from death—if die I must—when I have saved thee no indeed! for a man s loss from his family is felt while a woman s is of little moment

Or I will never be thy murderer as well as my mother s enough that I have shed her blood! With thee I fain would live one life or dying share the *self same fate For if I fall not here myself* I will take thee home or else remain and die with thee Hear my reasoning were this opposed to the will of Artemis how could Loxias have bidden me carry the image of the goddess to the citadel of Pallas? and see thy face wherefore putting all these facts together I am hopeful of securing our return

Ip How can we possibly escape death and likewise achieve our object? That is the weak point in our homeward route that is what we must devise

Or Could we contrive to kill the king?

Ip That is a fearful risk for new *comers to slay* their hosts

Or But we must run the risk if it will save us

Ip I commend your zeal but you could not succeed

Or Well suppose thou wert to hide me stealthily in yonder fane?

Ip That we might avail ourselves of the darkness I suppose and escape?

Or Yes for darkness is the robber s day the light was made for truth

Ip There are guards inside the temple whom we cannot elude

Or Alas! we are utterly undone how are we to escape?

Ip I have hit upon a novel scheme methinks

Or Of what kind? Impart thy thoughts to me that I may know it too

Ip I will make a cunning use of thy troubles.

Or No doubt thou wilt women are clever at inventing tricks

Ip I shall say thou art a matricide fresh from Argos

Or Make use of my misfortunes if it will serve thy turn

Ip And I shall tell them thou art no proper sacrifice for the goddess—

Or What reason canst thou give? I half suspect

Ip Because thou art unclean whereas I must have what is pure to offer

Or And how does this bring the goddess s image any nearer capture

Ip It will be my wish to purify thee in fresh sea water

Or Still is the image left in the temple and that *was our object in sailing hither*

Ip I will say I must wash it also as if thou hadst touched it

Or But where? Is it a sea filled creek thou meanest?

Ip There where thy ship is riding at anchor moored with ropes

Or Will the image be in thy hands or some other s?

Ip In mine for I alone may touch it

Or What part will Pylades have assigned him in the murder?

Ip He will be described as having the same stain on his hands as thou hast

Or Wilt thou do this unknown to the king or with his knowledge?

Ip After persuading him for I could never elude his vigilance

Or Well at any rate the ship is there with its oars ready to smite the waves Thy business must it be to see that all else is well arranged One thing alone is wanting these ladies secrecy implore them and find persuasive arguments woman is gifted with a power of moving sympathy and for the rest all perhaps may turn out well

Ip Dearest friends I look to you on you my fortunes are hanging whether for weal or woe and loss of fatherland and brother and sister dear

Be this the text of what I have to say—our womanhood with its kindly feeling towards members of our sex and our intense loyalty in preservin secrets that affect us all For my sake hold your peace and help us might and main to escape an honour to its owner is a trusty tongue Now ye see how a sin le chance is left these three fast friends either to return to their fatherland or die here If once my safety is secured I will bring thee safe to Hellas that thou mayst also share my fortune To thee and thee (*addressing different members of the* CHORUS) I make my prayer by thy right hand to thee by thy dear cheek, thy knees and all thou prizest most at home by father mother aye and babes if there be any mothers here What say ye? which of you assents to this and which refuses? Speak for if ye agree not to my proposal both I and my luckless brother are lost

Ch Take heart dear lady mine only save thyself for thou shalt find me dumb wherever thou enjoinest silence so help me mighty Zeus!

Ip A blessing on you for those words! may happiness be yours! Tis now thy part and thine (*to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES) to enter the temple for our mon *arch will soon be here inquiring* if the sacrifice of the strangers is over

Dread queen! that once didst save my life from my father s hand and murder dire save me now again and these as well else will the words of Loxias cease to be believed by men because of thee Oh! be gracious and quit this savage shore for glorious Athens for tis not right that thou shouldst live on here when a city so blest may be thine

Exeunt IPHIGENIA ORESTES *and* PYLADES

Ch O bird by ocean s rocky reefs! thou hal yon that singest thy hard fate in doleful song whose note the well trained ear can catch *and know that* thou art ever moaning for thy mate with thee I match my tearful plaint an unwinged songstress longing for the gatherings of Hellas for Artemis our h lp in childbirth whose home is by the Cynthian hill with its luxuriant palm and sprouting bay and sacred shoots of olive pale welcome to Latona in her travail beside the rounded eddying mere where tune

the strangers, takir the goddess s holy ima with her that cleansa was all sham.

Th How now? what e il influ nce possessed her?

Me In her efforts to sa e Orestes. Yes, that will ast nish thee

Th Wh h Orestes? h m wh m the daughter of T ndareus bare?

Me Him whom our goddess consecrated to her elf at her alta

Th Miraculous event! How can I find too strong a name for thee?

Me Turn not th attent on thither but listen to m and when thou hast heard ll and wei hed the matter devise a means of pursuit to hunt the stra gers down.

Th Say on, for thy word are good tis no short vo age the ha e before them, that so the can escape m ships.

Me As soon as we reached the beach where the ship of Orestes was moored n hidin the dau hter f Agamemnon signed to us, wh m thou sentest with her to carry fetters for the stran ers, t stand aloof as f he were about to li ht th m st c flame and off r th cleansing rites, which sh had come to per form. Holding in h r hand the cord that bound the strangers, sh went on behind them This seemed suspicious, sire b t thy attendant were satisfied. After while t make us think he wa reall doin something unusual, sh lifted up her oice and began chantin magic spells in a stra ge tongu as if for sooth sh we clea sing them t their blood guilti ess. Now aft r we had continued sittin long time t occurred t us that th strangers mi ht ha e broken loose and sla h r and taken to fli ht still s we were afraid of wit ess what we ought not to ha seen, we emained seated in sil nce until t last the same proposal was mad by all of us, t go t them, althou h no lea was gi n. And there we see th hull f a essel f H lla with win ed broadsid of oar blades fitted t t and fifty sailors, oar in hand, at th tholes, nd th youths, now free standi g as ern th ship while some w re steadyin the prow th poles, others ha n g th anchor t the cat heads, and th rest hauli in cables, gettin ladders read th while nd l tting them down into th sea for th trangers use. Now hen w saw their cr ft tricks, we laid hold of th tranger maid nd the hawsers recklessl trying t th same time unship th h lm from th galla t raft through ts rudderport and words passed between us What pr text ha ye for this stealth raid on images and priestesses from our land? who, and hose son art thou that seekest t sm ggl this maiden hence?" And answer came I am Orestes, th son of Aga m mnon this maid sown b other that thou ma st learn th truth for she whom I m takin hence with m is th sister I on e lost from my home" Non th less w h ld th tranger maid and were for forcing her t follow us t thee and that was how m heeks cam b these fearful blows for they had no weapons in their hands, nor t had w but ther was sturdy buff ting of fists, and likewise feet were a med at side and heart b both those youths, so we closed with th m and were at once exhausted Then we fled to the cliff most terribl marked co ered with blood w eals, some on their head and oth rs on their e es b t once stat oned on the rocks, we fou ht more cautious l and began by pelting them with stones but archers, posted *on the stern*, kept us off w th arrows, compelin us to ret re to a distanc Meantime a mon ter wa e had driven the essel shoreward and as the ma den feared to wet her feet Orestes took his sister on his left shoulder and st pp g into the sea he leapt upon the ladder and set h r do n inside the gallant ship, with the image of the daughter f Zeus wh ch fell from hea en. Anon a oice was heard speaki g from the vessel s midst Ye *mariners of Hell* grip your oars and dash the billows into foam, for now the prize is ours, which we sailed to th Eux ne Sea to win, through the jaws of *the clashin rocks*."

W th deep-drawn si hs of jo they smote the brine and the hip made wa so long as she was i side the ha *en but meeting a furious surge as* she wa cross g the harbour bar she began to la bour for on a sudd n a tempestuous w nd arose and *forced her shoreward tern foremost and the rowers* tugged and strained to fight the wa e but still it backward wash would dri e th ir ship to land again. Then Agamemnon dau hter rose and prayed "O daughte of Latona sa e me bri g thy priestess unto Hellas out f this sa age land and pardon m th ft As thou, O goddess, lovest thy brother so believe that I too l e my kith and kin." Therewith the sailors sun their paean to second the maiden s prayer and baring their arms from the shoulder down, gripped their oars t ghtly at the boatswain s cry B t er nearer to the rocks the ship drew on, and some spra nt the sea, others began fastenin twisted nooses to the shore while I wa straightway sent hithe to thee my liege to announce what had befallen there So haste thee hence with gyves and cords for unless th wa es grow calm, those stran gers ha o hope of safet

It is Poseidon, majestic ruler of the main, who is regarding Ilium w th fa our b t frowning on the race f P lops and now t seems, he will d l er up into th hand and the hands f thy subject the son of Agamemnon w th his si ter f h stands con victed f faithlessness to the goddess *in forgetting* the sacrifice at Aulis. *Exit* MESSENGER

Ch. Alas for thee Iphig nia! once more within the t rant s cl t h th u wilt be slain w th thy brothe

Th Ho! every dw ller in this forei n land up and bridl your steed and gall p to the beach! there awa t th trandin of the H llenes ship nd then hunt the godless wretches eagerl with the h lp of th goddess, Go, you others, and launch my swiftest galleys, that we may either o erhaul them b sea or rid them down by land and hurl them headlong from precip or impal their limbs on stakes.

(*Turning to th* CHORUS) As for you women, their accomplices herein, I will punish you hereafter when

Th It shall be done

Ip After drawing a veil over their heads—

Th In presence of the radiant sun

Ip Send some of thy attendants with me

Th Here are those who will form thy escort

Ip Also dispatch a messenger to warn the citizens

Th What will happen?

Ip To remain indoors all of them

Th Lest they meet with murderers?

Ip Aye for such things bring pollution

Th (*to a servant*) *Hence and proclaim this!*

Ip Above all must my friends—

Th Thou meanest me

Ip Keep wholly out of sight

Th Thou takest good heed for the city s weal

Ip No wonder

Th No wonder the whole city looks up to thee

Ip Do thou stay here before the shrine to help the goddess

Th With what object?

Ip Purify the building with torches

Th That thou mayst find it pure on thy return?

Ip As soon as the strangers pass out—

Th What must I do?

Ip Hold thy robe before thine eyes

Th To avoid the murderer s taint?

Ip But if I appear to be tarrying over long—

Th Is there to be any limit to my waiting?

Ip *Feel no surprise*

Th Take thine own time and serve the goddess well

Ip Oh may this purification have the end I wish!

Th I add my prayers to that *Exit* THOAS

Ip Behold I see the strangers just leaving the temple with ornaments for the goddess and young lambs for me to purge the taint of blood by shedding more with blazing torches too and all else that I myself prescribed for the cleansing of the strangers and the goddess

Away from this pollution citizens! each warden of the temple gates keeping pure his hands in Heaven s service whoso is eager to marry a wife all women labouring with child hence! hence! away! that this pollution cross not your path

(*Aside*) Virgin Queen daughter of Zeus and Latona! if I wash the murderers of their guilt and sacrifice where tis right I should thy temple will be pure for thy habitation and we shall be blest more I say not but still my meaning is plain to thee goddess and to those like thee who know the rest

Exit IPHIGENIA

Ch Fair was the child Latona bore one day in the fruitful vales of Delos a babe with golden hair well skilled in harping and his darling archery and leaving the scene of *her glorious travail she brought him* from that sea beat ridge to the peak of Parnassus parent of gushing streams where Dionysus holds his revels There neath the shade of leafy bays a speckled snake with blood red eyes armoured in gleaming scales an earth born monster huge terrific kept guard o er the oracle beneath the ground but thou whilst yet a babe still struggling in thy mother s arms didst slay him Phœbus and enter on most holy prophecy and thou sittest on the golden tripod thy throne of truth dispensing Heaven s oracles to men from beneath the sanctuary in thy home at earth s centre hard by the founts of Castaly

But when Apollo s coming had dispossessed Earth s daughter Themis of the holy oracles *her mother* raised a brood of nightly phantoms seen in dreams telling to many a mortal wight as he lay asleep in the darkness what has been and yet shall be and Earth *jealous for her daughter s sake* robbed Phœbus of the honour of his oracles but he the prince went hurrying off to Olympus and twined his childish arms round Zeus s throne beseeching him to take from his Pythian home the visions nightly sent by angry Earth and Zeus smiled to see his son come straight to him because he would keep his worship *rich in precious gifts and he nodded his locks prom*ising to stop the voices heard at night and took from mortals the divination of darkness restoring his honours to Loxias and to mortals their confidence in the oracles he chanted on his throne amid the throng of pilgrims

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger Guardians of the temple and ministers of the altar where is Thoas the king of this land? throw wide those bolted doors and call the monarch outside the building

Ch *What is wrong? if I may speak unbidden*

Me The pair of youths have disappeared seeking to fly the land by the tricks of Agamemnon s child and they have taken the sacred statue in the hold of their ship

Ch Incredible! But the king of the land whom thou wishest to see has already left the shrine in hot haste

Me Whither away? for he must be told what is happening

Ch We know not but set off in pursuit and *when thou hast found him tell thy news*

Me See how treacherous women are! Ye have had some share in these doings

Ch Art mad? What have we to do with the strangers escape? Away and lose no time in reaching thy master s gates!

Me Not until some one makes this point quite clear whether the ruler of the land is in the shrine or not

What ho! unbar the doors! to those inside I call tell my master I am here at the gate with heavy news for him

Th (*appearing at the temple door*) Who is raising this uproar at the temple battering the doors and spreading panic within?

Me *These women tried to get me away* asserting falsely that thou wert gone forth though in the temple all the time

Th What did they expect to gain? What was their object?

Me I will tell thee about them later listen now to the matter in hand The maid Iphigenia who used to be the priestess here has fled the land with

IPHIGENIA AT AULIS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AG MEMNON	CLYT EMNESTRA
ATTE D T *an old man*	I IGENIA
CHO S OF WOMEN OF CHALCIS	ACHILLES
M NELAUS	MES E GER

The sea-coast at A lis Enter AGAMEMNON *and* TTE D NT

Agamemn Old ma come luther and stand be fore my dwelli

Attendant I c me what new schemes n w ki g Agamemnon?

Ag Thou shalt hear

At I am all eagerness. 'Tis litl e ough sleep old a allows me and keenly it wat hes o er my eyes.

Ag What ca that star be steering his course yonder?

At Sirius, still shooting o er the en th o his way ear the Pleiads se enfold track.

Ag The birds are still at any rate and the sea s calm hushed are the winds, and silence b oods o er this narrow firth.

At Then by art th u outside thy tent why so restless, my lord A memno ? All is yet quiet her Aulis, the watch on the walls is not y t a tir Let us go in.

Ag I envy th e old man, ye a d e ety man who leads a life secure, unkno n and unre wned b t littl I en y those in ffice

At And y t tis there we place the be all and end all f existenc

Ag Aye, but that is where th da r comes and ambition sweet though t seems brings sorrow w th t ear pp oach At on time th unsatisfied claims f Hea en pset our lif at an th r the numerous pee ish fanc es f our subjects shatter it.

At I lik ot these se t ment in n who is a hi f It was t t e y y ll bless gs that Atreus beg t thee O A am mnon b t th u must needs experienc j and sor w like mortal as thou art E en tho gh thou lik t not this is what th gods decree but thou after l tti g thy t pe pread ts l ght broad writest the letter whi h s ill in thy hands and th n rasest the sam word ain sealin nd -opening the scr ll, th n fli ging the tabl t to th ound w th flood f tears nd leaving n thing undon in thy aimless beha i u to t mp thee mad What t troubles thee? what news is there affect g th m l ge? Come sha e w th m thy t rs t l al nd trusty hea t wilt thou be tell it for T ndareu sent me that day t form part f thy wif dowry and to wait upon th brid w th loy alty

Ag Leda, the daughter of Thestius, had three ch ld en, ma dens, Phœbe, Clytaemnestra my wife a d Helen this last it was who had for wooers the foremost of th fa oured sons of H llas but terrible threats of spill ng his ri al s blood were uttered by each of them should he fail t win the maid Now the matt r filled Tyndareus, her father with per plex ty at length this thought occurred to him the su tors should swear unto each other and join ri ht hands thereon a d pour libations with burnt sacrifice bind ng themsel es by th s curse Who-ever wins the child of Tyndareus for wife h m w ll we assi t in case a rival takes her from his h use and goes his w y robb g her husband of his rights and w will march ga nst that man in armed array and raze his city to the ground H llene no less than bar bar an "

Now wh n the had once pledged their word and old T nda eus w th n small cle e ness had beguiled them b his shrewd d ice he allowed his daughter t choose f m among her suit rs th one t wards whom the breath of lo e might fondly waft he H choice fell on Menelaus would she had never ta n him! A on the e came to Lacedæmon f om Phrygia s f lk the man wh legend says, adjudged the goddesses d pute in robes of gorgeous hue ablaz with g ld in t ue barbaric pomp and he, findin Menelaus gone from home, ca ed Helen off w th him t his stead ng on Id a willing para mour Goaded to frenzy Menel us flew through Hel las, t king th ancient oath xacted by Tyndareus and declar g the duty of helping the injured hus-ba d Whereat the hivalry of Hellas, brandishi their pears and d nning thei harness, came hither to the narrow tr ts of Aulis with a *mament* of ships a d troops w th many teed a d many a car and they chose me to captain them all f r the sake of Men laus, since I was his br ther Would that som oth r had gained that di ti ct on instead of m ! B t after the army was rathe d and come to-ther we still remai ed at Aulis weather bound d Cal has, the seer bade us n our perplexity sac rifice my own begotten child Iphi enia to Art mis, whose h me s in thi land declaring that f we of fered her w should sail and sack th Phrygians capital, but if we f rbo e, this was n t for us. Wh I heard this, I c mma ded T lthybius with loud proclamation t disband the whole host, as I could

I have leisure but now with the present business before me I will not remain idle

ATHENA *appears above the stage*

Athena Whither King Thoas whither art thou carrying this pursuit? Hearken to the words of Athena who is here Cease pursuing or sending soldiers streaming after them for Orestes was destined by Apollo s oracle to come hither first to escape the fury of the avenging fiends and then to convey his sister home to Argos and the sacred image to my land a respite from his present afflictions This I say to thee and for Orestes whom thev thinkest to catch at sea and slay e en now is Poseidon guiding him hence on his ship for my sake smoothing the surface of the deep

Orestes—thou hearest the voice for it is a goddess speaking although thou art not here—mark well my hests take the image and thy sister and go hence and when thou art come to Athen that god built town thou wilt find a spot upon the utmost bounds of Attica bordering on Carystus ridge a holy place called Halae by my people There build a temple and set up the image named after the Taurian land and the labours long endured by thee in ranging Hellas to and fro through the goading of avenging fiends Henceforth shall mortal men chant her praises as Artemis the Taurian goddess Ordain this law also when the people celebrate her festival the priest to compensate her for thy sacrifice must hold his knife to a human throat and blood must flow to satisfy the sacred claims of the goddess that she may have her honours

As for thee Iphigenia thou must keep he temple keys at Brauron s hallowed path of steps[1] there shalt thou die and there shall they bury thee honouring thee with offerings of robes e en all the finely woven vestments left in their homes by such as die in child birth (*To* THOAS) And I charge thee send these daughters of Hellas on their way hence because of their righteous decision I saved thee once before Orestes when I allotted the votes equally on the hill of Ares and this shall be an ordinance whoever secures an equal division of votes wins his case So bear thy sister from the land son of Agamemnon and thou Thoas be no longer angry

Th Whoso hears the voice of God and disobeys is no sane man O queen Athena For my part I am not wroth with Orestes or his sister though he *has* taken the image hence for what credit is there in struggling with the mighty gods? Let them go with the goddess s image to thy land and there erect it to their joy Moreover I will send these women to Hellas their happy home as thou commandest me and will check my spear which I am lifting against the strangers and stop the sailing of my ships since this is thy good pleasure goddess

At Well said for necessity is stronger than thee aye and than the gods

Go ye breezes waft the son of Agamemnon on his way to Athens and I myself will share his voyage keeping the image of my sister safe

Ch Go and luck go with you happy in your preservation!

Hail to thee! Pallas Athena name revered by deathless gods as well as mortal men! we will perform all thy bidding for very welcome and unlooked for are the words I have heard

Most holy Victory! possess my life and never grudge thy crown! *Exeunt* OMNES

[1] S d to ref r to steps cut in the rock leading to the templ of A temis at Brauron

Attica, having the goddess Pallas set in a winged car drawn by steeds with solid hoof, a lucky sight for mariners. Then I saw Boeotia's fleet of fifty sails decked with ensigns; these had Cadmus at the stern holding a golden dragon at the beaks of the vessels, and earth-born Leitus was their admiral. Likewise there were ships from Phocis; and from Locris came the son of Oileus with an equal contingent, leaving famed Thronium's citadel; and from Mycenae, the Cyclopes' town, Atreus' son sent a hundred well-manned galleys, his brother being with him in command, as friend with friend, that Hellas might exact vengeance on her who had fled her home to wed a foreigner. Also I saw from Gerenian Nestor's prows from Pylos the sign of his neighbour Alpheus, four-footed like a bull. Moreover there was a squadron of twelve Aenianian sail under King Gouneus; and next the lords of Elis, stationed near them, whom all the people named Epeians; and Eurytus was lord of these. Likewise he led the Taphian warriors with the white oar blades, the subjects of Meges, son of Phyleus, who had left the isles of the Echinades, where sailors cannot land. Lastly Aias, reared in Salamis, was joining his right wing to the left of those near whom he was posted, closing the line with his outermost ships—twelve barques obedient to the helm—as I heard and then saw the crews; no safe return shall he obtain, who bringeth his barbaric boats to grapple Aias. There I saw the naval armament, but some things I heard at home about the gathered host, whereof I still have a recollection.

Enter MENELAUS *and* ATTENDANT

At. (*As* MENELAUS *wrests a letter from him*) Strange daring thine Menelaus, where thou hast no right.

Menelaus. Stand back! thou carriest loyalty to thy master too far.

At. The very reproach thou hast for me is to my credit.

Men. Thou shalt rue it, if thou meddle in matters that concern thee not.

At. Thou hadst no right to open a letter, which I was carrying.

Men. No, nor thou to be carrying sorrow to all Hellas.

At. Argue that point with others, but surrender that letter to me.

Men. I shall not let go.

At. Nor yet will I let loose my hold.

Men. Why then, this staff of mine will be dabbling thy head with blood ere long.

At. To die in my master's cause were a noble death.

Men. Let go! thou art too wordy for a slave.

At. (*Seeing* AGAMEMNON *approaching*) Master, he is wronging me; he snatched thy letter violently from my grasp, Agamemnon, and will not heed the claims of right.

Enter AGAMEMNON

Ag. How now! what means this uproar at the gates, this indecent brawling?

Men. My tale, not his, has the better right to be spoken.

Ag. Thou, Menelaus! what quarrel hast thou with this man, why art thou haling him hence?

Exit ATTENDANT

Men. Look me in the face! Be that the prelude to my story.

Ag. Shall I, the son of Atreus, close my eyes from fear?[1]

Men. Seest thou this scroll, the bearer of a shameful message?

Ag. I see it, yes, and first of all surrender it.

Men. No, not till I have shewn its contents to all the Danai.

Ag. What! hast thou broken the seal and dost know already what thou shouldst never have known?

Men. Yes, I opened it and know to thy sorrow the secret machinations of thy heart.

Ag. Where didst thou catch my servant? Ye gods! what a shameless heart thou hast!

Men. I was awaiting thy daughter's arrival at the camp from Argos.

Ag. What right hast thou to watch my doings? Is not this a proof of shamelessness?

Men. My wish to do it gave the spur, for I am no slave to thee.

Ag. Infamous! Am I not to be allowed the management of my own house?

Men. No, for thou thinkest crooked thoughts, one thing now, another formerly, and something different presently.

Ag. Most exquisite refining on evil themes! A hateful thing the tongue of knavery!

Men. Aye, but a mind unstable is an unjust possession, disloyal to friends. Now I am anxious to test thee, and seek not thou from rage to turn aside from the truth, nor will I on my part overstrain the case. Thou rememberest when thou wert all earnestness to captain the Danai against Troy, making a pretence of declining, though eager for it in thy heart; how humble thou wert then! taking each man by the hand and keeping open doors for every fellow-townsman who cared to enter, affording each in turn a chance to speak with thee, even though some desired it not, seeking by these methods to purchase popularity from all bidders; then when thou hadst secured the command, there came a change over thy manners; thou wert no longer so cordial as before to whilom friends, but hard of access, seldom to be found at home. But the man of real worth ought not to change his manners in the hour of prosperity, but should then show himself most staunch to friends, when his own good fortune can help them most effectually. This was the first cause I had to reprove thee, for it was here I first discovered thy villainy; but afterwards, when thou camest to Aulis with all the gathered hosts of Hellas, thou wert of no account; no! the want of a favourable breeze filled thee with consternation at the chance dealt out by Heaven. Anon the Danai began demanding that thou shouldst send the fleet away instead of vainly

[1] The point lies in the play on the name Atreides, "the fearless," "shall I the son of fearlessness fear," etc.

never bear to slay daughter of mine Whereupon my brother bringing every argument to bear persuaded me at last to face the crime so I wrote in a folded scroll and sent to my wife bidding her despatch our daughter to me on the pretence of wedding Achilles at the same time magnifying his exalted rank and saying that he refused to sail with the Achæans unless a bride of our lineage should go to Phthia Yes this was the inducement I offered my wife inventing as I did a sham marriage for the maiden Of all the Achæans we alone know the real truth Calchas Odysseus Menelaus and myself but that which I then decided wrongly I now rightly countermand again in this scroll which thou old man hast found me opening and resealing beneath the shade of night Up now and away with this missive to Argos and I will tell thee by word of mouth all that is written herein the contents of the folded scroll for thou art loyal to my wife and house

At Say on and make it plain that what my tongue utters may accord with what thou hast written

Ag *Daughter of Leda in addition to my first letter* I now send thee word not to despatch thy daughter to Eubœa s embosomed wing to the waveless bay of Aulis for after all we will celebrate our child s wedding at another time

At And how will Achilles cheated of his bride curb the fury of his indignation against thee and thy wife?

Ag Here also is a danger [1]

At Tell me what thou meanest

Ag It is but his name not himself that Achilles is lending knowing nothing of the marriage or of my scheming or my professed readiness to betroth my daughter to him for a husband s embrace

At *A dreadful venture thine king Agamemnon!* thou that by promise of thy daughter s hand to the son of the goddess wert for bringing the maid hither to be sacrificed for the Danai

Ag Woe is me! ah woe! I am utterly distraught bewilderment comes o er me

Away! hurry thy steps yielding nothing to old age

At *In haste I go my liege*

Ag Sit not down by woodland founts scorn the witcheries of sleep

At Hush!

Ag And when thou passest any place where roads diverge cast thine eyes all round taking heed that no mule wain pass by on rolling wheels bearing my daughter hither to the ships of the Danai and thou see it not

At It shall be so

Ag Start then from the bolted gates and if thou meet the escort *start them back again and drive* at full speed to the abodes of the Cyclopes

At But tell me how shall my message find credit with thy wife or child?

[1] Paley follows Musgrave in ass gning these words to Agamemn n assuming that the king passes ver the servant s last remark and adds a new cause of al rm viz the *fraud that is being practised on Achilles*

Ag Preserve the seal which thou bearest on this *scroll Away! already the dawn is growing grey* lighting the lamp of day yonder and the fire of the sun s four steeds help me in my trouble

Exit ATTENDANT

None of mortals is prosperous or happy to the last for none was ever born to a painless life

Exit AGAMEMNON

Enter CHORUS OF WOMEN OF CHALCIS

Chorus To the sandy beach of sea coast Aulis I came after a voyage through the tides of Euripus leaving Chalcis on its narrow firth my city which feedeth the waters of far famed Arethusa near the sea that I might behold the army of the Achæans and the ships rowed by those god like heroes for our husbands tell us that fair haired Menelaus and high born Agamemnon are leading them to Troy on a thousand ships in quest of the lady Helen whom herdsman Paris carried off from the banks of reedy Eurotas—his guerdon from Aphrodite when that queen of Cyprus entered beauty s lists with Hera and Pallas at the gushing fount

Through the grove of Artemis rich with sacrifice I sped my course the red blush mantling on my cheeks from maiden modesty in my eagerness to see the soldiers camp the tents of the mail clad Danai and their gathered steeds Two chieftains there I saw met together in council one was Aias son of Oileus the other Aias son of Telamon crown of glory to the men of Salamis and I saw *Protesilaus* and Palamedes sprung from the son of Poseidon sitting there amusing themselves with intricate figures at draughts Diomedes too at his favourite sport of hurling quoits and Meriones the War god s son a marvel to mankind stood at his side likewise I beheld the offspring of Laertes who came from his *island hills and with him Nireus handsomest* of all Achæans Achilles next that nimble runner swift on his feet as the wind whom Thetis bore and Chiron trained him I saw upon the beach racing in full armour along the shingle and straining every nerve to beat a team of four horses as he sped round the track on foot and Eumelus the grandson of Pheres *their driver* was shouting when I saw him goading on his goodly steeds with their bits of chased gold work whereof the centre pair that bore the yoke had dappled coats picked out with white while the trace horses on the outside facing the turning post in the course were bays with spotted fetlocks Close beside them Peleus son leapt on his way in all his harness keeping abreast the rail by the axle box

Next I sought the countless fleet a wonder to behold that I might fill my girlish eyes with gazing a sweet delight The warlike Myrmidons from Phthia *held the right wing with fifty swift cruisers* upon whose sterns right at the ends stood Nereid goddesses in golden effigy the ensign of Achilles armament Near these were moored the Argive ships in equal numbers o er which Mecisteus son whom Taulaus his grandsire reared and Sthenelus son of Capaneus were in command next in order Theseus son was stationed at the head of sixty ships from

sons to weep nd tell out all the r so rows while to the high bor man come these same so rows, but we ha dignity thro ed o r o r l fe and are the peopl s sla es. I for instance am ashamed to weep nor less, poor wretch t check my tears at the aw ful pass to wh ch I am b ught Oh! what am I to tell my wife? how shall I welcome her? with what fa e meet h r? f she too ha undone me by com ng unin ited n this my hour of sorrow yet it was b t natural she should c m with her daughter to pre pa the b de and perf rm the fondest dut es, wl ere she ll disco r m llainy And for this poor maid — hy ma d? Death m th nks, w ll soon make her his brid —how I pity her! Thus will he plead to m I trow My fathe will thou slay me? Be such th weddin thou thyself ma st fi d a d whoso e er is a fr nd t th eel wh ! Orestes fr m his tat on near us, w ll cry in child sh accents, inartic late yet f he n th mea ng Al s! to what utter ru n Pa s, th son of Priam the cause of these trou bles, ha bro ht me by his uni n ith Helen!

Ch I pity her myself n such wise as a woman and sh a strange may bemoan th m fortunes of r alty

Men (*Offeri g hi ha d*) Th ha d brother! let me g sp it.

Ag I giv t thu the v ct ry m ne the sorrow

Men By Pel ps our puted grandsir a d Atreus ou father I swea to tell thee the truth from my heart th t a y o e t pu pose but nly what I thi k The s ght of thee in tears mad m pity thee nd n return I shed a tear f thee *myself* I ithd w from my forme *proposa s,* easi g to be *a cause* f fea to thee yea a d I will put m self in thy p ese t position and I counsel thee slay *not* thy child n prefer my i t rest to thi ne for it s not just that th u h uld t groev hile I am glad that thy child e should di h le m ne st ll see the light of day What is t af er ll I se k? If I am set on ma riage c uld I ot find b ide s choice else here? Was I to lose a b ther—the la t I hou'd have lost—to n a He en g tt ng bad f good? I as mad impetuous as a youth t ll I perce ed on clos v ew what lavi g ch ld en really mea t. Moreo I m f lled with compassi n f r the hapless maid doom d t bleed that I may wed when I eflect that w k n What has thy da ht r to d w th H) ? Let th rmy be disbanded nd lea e Aulis dry those streamin eyes, b oth nd p oke m n t to tears. Whate c ce th is ha t in oracles that ffect thy ch d let it be one f mi to thy band I resi n my ha the ein A udd cha ge thou it say *from my fell pr posals!* A nat ral se f m affect on for my broth c used th ha g These th vs of ma ot oid f tu t pursue o ea h occasion what is best

Ch A g ou speech wo thy of Ta talus, th son of Zeus Thou dost n t shame thy estry

Ag I th k thee M n a s, fo th unexpected suggest on tis an ho ourabl p posal w rthy of thee.

Men Sometimes love sometimes the selfishness of their famil es causes a quarrel bet een brothers I loathe a relat ship of this k nd wh ch is bitter ness to both

Ag 'Tis useless, for c rcumst nces compel me to carry out the mur lerous sacrif ce of my da hter

Men How so? who will compel thee to slay thine own child?

Ag The wl ole Achaean army here assembled

Men Not if thou send her back to Argos

Ag I mi ht do that unnot ced but there will be another thing I cannot

Men What is that? Thou must not fear the mob too much.

Ag Calchas will tell the Arg e host his *oracles.*

M n Not if he be killed *ere that—an easy matter*

Ag The whole tribe of seers is a curse w th its am b tion

Men Yes, and good for nothing and useless when amongst us

A Has tl e thought wh l is rising in my m nd no t rrors for thee?

Men How can I und rstand thy meanin unless thou declare it?

Ag The son of Sis phu knows all

Men. Od sseus ca not possibly h rt us.

Ag He was ever sh fty by nature sid w th the mob

Men True he i enslaved by the love of popu larity a fearful e d

Ag Beth nk thee then, will he not a ise amon the A gives and tell them the oracles that Cal has deli ered say ng of me that I undertook t offer Art mis a s c i m, and after all am pr vin fal e? Then when he has ca ried th army away with h m h w l b d the Arg es lav us and *sacrifice* the ma den and if I escape to Ar os, th y will come and destroy the place razin it to the ground Cyclopean walls and all That is my tro ble Woe is me! t what stra ts Hea en has brought me at this pass! Take o e precauti n for me Menelaus, *as tl ou goest* through the host that Clyt mnestra le rn th s not t ll I hav taken *my child* and devoted her to death that my fflict on may be attended with the fewest tears (*Turn g to the* CHORUS) And you, ye stra er dames k p s lence

Exe nt A M M ON *and* M NELAUS

Ch H ppy they who find the goddess com n mod rat might sharing with self restraint in Aph rod t gift f marriage and enjoying calm nd rest from fr nzied pass ons, wh er the Lo e god g ld n ha ed st etches his cha med bow w th r r ws twain and o e is a med at happi ess, the other t life s conf sion O lady Cypris, qu n of beauty! far from *my* bridal bo er I ban the la t Be m n delight in mode tio and p re desires, and may I ha e a sha e in lo e b t h n ever s th e n!

Men s natures ry a d th r habits diffe but true i is al ays man fest Lik wis the tra ning that c mes of educat o c nd c s greatly to irtue for not o ly is modesty wisdom but t ha also the rare gr e of seeing b st better judgm nt what is

toiling on at Aulis what dismay and confusion was then depicted in thy looks to think that thou with a thousand ships at thy *command* hadst *not* occupied the plains of Priam with thy armies! And thou wouldst ask my counsel What am I to do? what scheme can I devise where find one? to save thyself being stripped of thy command and losing thy fair fame Next when Calchas bade thee offer thy daughter in sacrifice to Artemis declaring that the Danai should then sail thou wert overjoyed and didst gladly undertake to offer the maid and of thine own accord—never allege compulsion!—thou art sending word to thy wife to despatch thy daughter hither on pretence of wedding Achilles This is the same air that heard thee say it and after all thou turnest round and hast been caught recasting thy letter to this effect I will no longer be my daughter s *murderer* Exactly so! Countless others have gone through this phase in their conduct of public affairs they make an effort while in power and then retire dishonourably sometimes owing to the senselessness of the citizens sometimes deservedly because they are too feeble of themselves to maintain their watch upon the state For my part I am more sorry for our unhappy Hellas whose purpose was to read these worthless foreigners a lesson while now she will let them escape and mock her thanks to thee and thy daughter May I never then appoint a man to rule my country or lead its warriors because of his kinship! Ability is what the general must have since any man with ordinary intelligence can govern a state

Ch For brethren to come to words and blows whene er they disagree is terrible

Ag I wish to rebuke thee in turn briefly not lifting mine eyes too high in shameless wise but in *more sober fashion as a brother for it is a good* man s way to b considerate Prithee why this burst of fury these bloodshot eyes? who wrongs thee? what is it thou wantest? Thou art fain to win a virtuous bride Well I cannot supply thee for she whom thou once hadst was ill controlled by thee *Am I then* a man who never went astray to suffer for thy sins? or is it my popularity that galls thee? No! it is the longing thou hast to keep a fair wife in thy embrace casting reason and honour to the winds A bad man s pleasures are like himself Am I mad if I change to wiser counsels after previously deciding amiss? Thine is the madness rather in wishing to recover a wicked wife once thou hadst lost her—a stroke of Heaven sent luck Those foolish suitors swore that oath to Tyndareus in their longing to wed but Hope was the goddess that led them on I trow and she it was that brought it about rather then thou and thy mightiness So take the field with them they are ready for it in the folly of their hearts for the deity is not without insight but is able to discern where oaths have been wrongly pledged or forcibly *extorted* I will not slay my children nor shall thy interests be prospered by justice in thy vengeance for a worthless wife while I am left wasting night and day in sorrow for what I did to one of my own flesh and blood contrary to all law and justice There is thy answer shortly given *clear* and easy to understand and if thou wilt not come to thy senses I shall do the best for myself

Ch This differs from thy previous declaration but there is good in it—thy child s reprieve

Men Ah me how sad my lot! I have no friends then after all

Ag Friends thou hast if thou seek not their destruction

Men Where wilt thou find any proof that thou art sprung from the same sire as I?

Ag Thy moderation not thy madness do I share by nature

Men Friends should sympathize with friends in sorrow

Ag Claim my help by kindly service not by paining me

Men So thou hast no mind to share this trouble with Hellas?

Ag No Hellas is diseased like thee according to some god s design

Men Go vaunt thee then on thy sceptre after betraying thine own brother! while I will seek some different means and other friends

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger Agamemnon lord of all Hellenes! I am come and bring thee thy daughter whom thou didst call Iphigenia in thy home and her mother thy wife Clytemnestra is with her and the child Orestes a sight to gladden thee after thy long absence from thy palace but as they had been travelling long and far they are now refreshing their tender feet at the waters of a fair spring they and their horses for we turned these loose in the grassy mead ow to browse their fill but I am come as their forerunner to prepare thee for their reception for the army knows already of thy daughter s arrival *so* quickly did the rumour spread and all the folk are running together to the sight that they may see thy child for Fortune s favourites enjoy a world wide fame and have all eyes fixed on them *Is it a* wedding? some ask or what is happening? or has king Agamemnon from fond yearning summoned his daughter hither? From others thou wouldst have heard They are presenting the maiden to Artemis queen of Aulis previous to marriage who can the bridegroom be that is to lead her home?

Come then begin the rites—that is the next *step*—by getting the baskets ready crown your heads prepare the wedding hymn thou and prince Menelaus with thee let flutes resound throughout the tents with noise of dancer s feet for this is a *happy* day that is come for the maid

Ag Thou hast my thanks now go within for the rest it will be well as Fate proceeds

Exit MESSENGER

Ah woe is me! unhappy wretch what can I say? where shall I begin? Into what cruel straits have I been plunged! Fortune has outwitted me proving far cleverer than any cunning of mine What an advantage humble birth possesses! for it is easy for her

Ag Th re is a sacr fi e I ha e first t offer here

Ip Yea tis thy duty to heed rel , o w th a d of h ly rit s

Ag Thou wilt witn s it for thou w lt be stand near the la er

Ip Am I to lead th dance then round the altar f ther?

Ag (*Aside*) I c u t thee happ er than myself be cause thou k owest nothing (*To* IPHI NI) Go w thin nto the presen e of ma dens, after thou hast en m thy ha d nd one sad k ss, o th e e of thy lengthy sojourn far from thy father s side Bosom heek nd golde ha rl h how g ous is ha e f d H len a d the Phrygians e tyl I can n m e the tea s come welli g to my eyes, the moment I t uch th e *Exit* IPHIGENIA

(*Turn g to* CLYT EMNE TR) Herein I cra e thy pa do da ht of Leda if I showed excess e grief at the th ught f e ign n my daughter to Ach lles f r thou h we r sending her to ta t of bliss, st ll it wri gs a pa ent heart, when he the fath e who ha to led so hard f them commits h s children t the h m s f strang rs

Cl I m n t so d of sense bethink thee I shall g through this s well when I lead the ma d n from the chambe to th sou d of the marriage hym he f e I chide th not but cust m will com b e with time t make the smart gr w less.

As touching him to whom th u hast bet othed ou daughter I know h s n me ti true but would f lea n of his linea e a d th la d of his birth

Ag Th re was n Ægi na the dau ht r of Asopus

Cl Who wedded her? some m rtal r a god?

Ag Ze s and she b Æacus the pr nce of Œn) e[1]

Cl What son of Æacu secured h I ther halls?

Ag P leus who wedded the da ght of Ner us

Cl W th th god s conse t or he he had taken h i p t f gods?

Ag Zeus betr thed h and her guar lian gave se t

Cl Whe e d d he ma ry h r? amid the billows of th sea?

Ag I Chiron s home, at sac ed P l o s foot

Cl What! the bode ascr bed t th ra of Ce t urs?

Ag It wa th th gods elebrated the mar iage f-a t of P l s.

Cl D d Th ti his father train Achilles?

Ag Ch n b ought him p t p event his learn ng l way of th ked

Cl Ah! wise th tea her st ll wiser the fath r who i tru ted his son t such h nd

Ag Su h th fut r hu band f thy da ghter

Cl A blam less lo d b t what city in Hellas is his?

Ag H dw lls n th bank f the ri er Apidanu i th bo der of Phthia

Cl W it thou on v u daughter thith ?

Ag H wh takes her t h mself ll see t that.

Cl Happ ness attend the pair! Wh ch day will he marry her?

Ag A soon as the full moon comes to give its bless ng

Cl Hast thou already offered the goddess a sacri fice to usher in the maiden s marriage?

Ag I am about to d so that is the very thin I was engaged in

Cl W lt tho celebrate the marriage feast there after?

Ag Yes when I have offered a sacrifice required by Hea en of me

Cl But where am I to make ready the feast for the women?

Ag Here bes de ur gallant Ar e sh ps

Cl Finely her l but still I must good come of it for all that!

Ag I will tell thee lady what to do so obey me n

Cl Wherein? for I was e er wont to yield thee obedience

Ag Here where the brideg oom s, w ll I—

Cl Which of my dut es will ye pe form in the m the sabsence?

Ag Gi e thy child away with help of Dana

Cl And where am I to be the while?

Ag Get thee to Argos, a d take care of thy un wedded daughters

Cl And lea e my child? Th en who w ll raise her brid l to ch?

Ag I will p ovide the p per wedding torch

Cl That s not the custom but thou thinkest lightly of these th ngs

Ag It is not good thou sh uld t be alone among a sold r-crowd

Cl It is good that a mother sh uld gi e h r own child way

Ag Ay and that those maidens at home should not be l ft al ne

Cl They ar in safe ke pin pent in thei maiden bower

A Obey

Cl Nay by the godde s-queen of Argos! g man age matters out of doors but in the h us it is my pla e t decid what is p per for maidens at their wedd g *Ex t*

Ag Woe is me! my eff rts e baffled I am d s appo nted n my hope anxio s as I was to get my w fe out f s ght foiled at ry point I fo m my plot a d btle schemes gain t my best beloved B t I will go in spite of all w th Calcha the priest, to inq r the goddess s good plea e fra ght with ll l ck as t s t me nd with tro ble to H llas He wh is w e ho ld keep in his house a good and use ful w f e at all *Exit*

Ch They say the Helle es gath red host will e me n ms abou d their sh ps to S mois w th its sil er edd es, even t llium th plain of T oy belo ed by Phœbus where famed Cassandra I am told when e the god resistless prophecies inspire he wildly tosses her golden t esses, wreathed with crown of dant ba And on the tow rs of T oy and round

[1] The ld name f Ægina.

right whereby a glory ever young is shed o'er life by reputation A great thing it is to follow virtue's footsteps—for women in their secret loves while in men again an inborn sense of order shown in countless ways adds to a city's greatness

Thou camest O Paris to the place where thou wert reared to herd the kine amid the white heifers of Ida piping in foreign strain and breathing on thy reeds an echo of the Phrygian airs Olympus played Full uddered cows were browsing at the spot where that verdict 'twixt goddesses was awaiting thee—the cause of thy going to Hellas to stand before the ivory palace kindling love in Helen's trancèd eyes and feeling its flutter in thine own breast whence the fiend of strife brought Hellas with her chivalry and ships to the towers of Troy

Oh! great is the bliss the great enjoy Behold Iphigenia the king's royal child and Clytaemnestra the daughter of Tyndareus how proud their lineage! how high their pinnacle of fortune! These mighty ones whom wealth attends are very gods in the eyes of less favoured folk

Halt we here maidens of Chalcis and lift the queen from her chariot to the ground without stumbling supporting her gently in our arms with kind intent that the renowned daughter of Agamemnon but just arrived may feel no fear strangers ourselves avoid we aught that may disturb or frighten the strangers from Argos

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA *and* IPHIGENIA

Clytaemnestra I take this as a lucky omen thy kindness and auspicious greeting and have good hope that it is to a happy marriage I conduct the bride (*To Attendants*) Take from the chariot the dowry I am bringing for my daughter and convey it within with careful heed

My daughter leave the horse drawn car planting thy faltering footstep delicately (*To the* CHORUS) Maidens take her in your arms and lift her from the chariot and let one of you give me the support of her hand that I may quit my seat in the carriage with fitting grace

Some of you stand at the horses heads for the horse has a timid eye easily frightened here take this child Orestes son of Agamemnon babe as he still is

What! sleeping little one tired out by thy ride in the chariot? Awake to bless thy sister's wedding for thou my gallant boy shalt get by this marriage a kinsman gallant as thyself the Nereid's godlike offspring Come hither to thy mother my daughter Iphigenia and seat thyself beside me and stationed near show my happiness to these strangers yes come hither and welcome the sire thou lovest so dearly

Hail! my honoured lord king Agamemnon! we have obeyed thy commands and are come

Enter AGAMEMNON

Iphigenia (*Throwing herself into* AGAMEMNON'S *arms*) Be not wroth with me mother if I run from thy side and throw myself on my father's breast

O my father! I long to outrun others and embrace thee after this long while for I yearn to see thy face be not wroth with me

Cl Thou mayst do so daughter for of all the children I have born thou hast ever loved thy father best

Ip I see thee father joyfully after a long season

Ag And I thy father thee thy words do equal duty for both of us

Ip All hail father! thou didst well in bringing me hither to thee

Ag I know not how I am to say yes or no to that my child

Ip Ha! how wildly thou art looking spite of thy joy at seeing me

Ag A man has many cares when he is king and general too

Ip Be mine all mine to-day turn not unto moody thoughts

Ag Why so I am all thine to-day I have no other thought

Ip Then smooth thy knitted brow unbend and smile

Ag Lo! my child my joy at seeing thee is even as it is

Ip And hast thou then the tear-drop streaming from thy eyes?

Ag Aye for long is the absence from each other that awaits us

Ip I know not dear father mine I know not of what thou art speaking

Ag Thou art moving my pity all the more by speaking so sensibly

Ip My words shall turn to senselessness, if that will cheer thee more

Ag (*Aside*) Ah woe is me! this silence is too much (*To* IPHIGENIA) Thou hast my thanks

Ip Stay with thy children at home father

Ag My own wish! but to my sorrow I may not humour it

Ip Ruin seize their warring and the woes of Menelaus!

Ag First will that which has been my life long ruin bring ruin unto others

Ip How long thou wert absent in the bays of Aulis!

Ag Aye and there is still a hindrance to my sending the army forward

Ip Where do men say the Phrygians live father?

Ag In a land where I would Paris the son of Priam ne'er had dwelt

Ip 'Tis a long voyage thou art bound on father after thou leavest me

Ag Thou wilt meet thy father again my daughter

Ip Ah! would it were seemly that thou shouldst take me as a fellow voyager!

Ag Thou too hast a voyage to make to a haven where thou wilt remember thy father

Ip Shall I sail thither with my mother or alone?

Ag All alone without father or mother

Ip What! hast thou found me a new home father!

Ag Enough of this! 'tis not for girls to know such things

Ip Speed home from Troy I pray thee father as soon as thou hast triumphed there

been m ne this long t me past.

At True nd though I bear thee all goodwill, I like not thy lord so well.

Cl Come come unf ld whate er thou hast to sa

At. Her fath r he that begat her i on the point of la ing thy da ghter with his own ha d—

Cl. How? Out upon thy story old d tard! thou art mad

At Severing with a sword the hapless maid s white throat

Cl Ah woe is me! Is my hu band haply mad?

At Nay sa except wh re thou and thy da gh ter are concerned th re he is mad

Cl What is his reason? what vengeful fiend im pel him?

At Oracles—at least so Calcha says, in order that the host may t rt—

Cl Whither? Woe is me nd woe is thee thy father destined return!

At To th halls of Darda us, that Menelau may ecov r Helen.

Cl. So Helen s return the was fated to affect Iphi genia?

At Thou knowest all he fathe is bout t offer thy hild to Artemis.

Cl B t that ma riage—what pret xt had t f r bringi g m f om hom ?

At An inducement t thee to bri g thy da hter cheerf ll to wed h to Achilles.

Cl On deadly rrand rt thou come m da h t r both thou, nd I thy mother

At Piteous the l t f both f you—and fearful Agamemnon s e t

Cl Alas! I am undone m yes can n long stem their tears.

At What more natural than t weep th loss of thy hildren?

Cl. Whence old man, dost sa thou hadst this news?

At I had tarted t carry thee a l tt r ferring t th former w ting

Cl Forbidd g or combi in to urge my bri gi g th hild t her death?

At N y forb dd g t fo th lord was then in his sober senses.

Cl. How comes t then, if thou wert really bri g me a l tt that thou dost not now d li er it t m hand ?

At M laus snat hed t f om me—h who caused this trouble.

Cl Dost thou hear that son of P l us, the N reid child?

Ach I ha been li tening t the tale f th suff ings, nd I am nd gna t to thi k I wa used as a tool

Cl They will lay m child they ha tricked her w th thy marriag

Ach Lik thee I blam th lord nor d I iew t with me indiff ence

Cl No lon e will I let shame prevent my k eel g t thee mortal to one goddess-born why d I ect esery whose terest shou.d I onsult be for my hild (*Throwing herself before* ACHILLES) Oh! help me goddess born in my sore distress, and her that was called thy bride—in vain t s true yet called sh was. For thee it was I wreathed her head and led her forth as if to marriage but no it i to slau hter I am bringi g her On thee will come re proach because th u didst not help her for though n t wedded to her yet wert thou the lo ing hus band of my hapless maid in name at any rate By thy beard right hand and mother too I do implore thee for thy name t was that worked my ruin and thou art bound to stand by that Except thy knees I ha e no altar whereunto to fly and not a friend stand at my side Thou hast heard the cru l aban doned scheme of Agamemnon and I a woman, am come a thou seest to a camp of lawless sail r folk bold in evil s cause thou h useful when they list wh refore if thou boldly stretch forth thine arm in my behalf our safety is assured but if thou w th hold it we re lost

Ch A wondrous thin is motherhood carrying with it a potent spell, wherein all share so that for their children s sake they will end e affl ction.

Ach My proud spirit is st rred to range aloft but it ha learnt to grie in m sfortune and rejoice in high prosperity with equal moderat on. For these e the m n who can count on ord ring all their li ari ht by wisdom s rules. True there are cases wh re tis pleasant not to be too wise but there are others, where some store of w sdom helps. Brought up n god ly Chiron s halls m self I learnt to keep a single heart and pro ided th Atridæ lead ari ht, I will obey them but when th y cease th from, no more will I obey N y but here and n Troy I will show the freedom of my nature nd as fa in m lies, do honour to Ares with my spear Thee lady who hast suffered so cruelly from thy earest and dea est will I by every effort n a youn man power set ri ht in est ng thee with that amount of pity and ne er shall thy daugh t r after being one called my brid d e by her fa th s hand for I will not lend myself t thy hus band subtl tricks no! for it will be my name that kills thy child although it w ldeth not the steel Thy own husband is the actual cause but I shall no longer be guiltless, f, because of m and m mar riag this maiden perishes, sh that hath suffered pa t endurance and been the ict m of affronts most strangely undeserved. So am I made th poorest w tch in Argos I thin of na ght and Menelaus countin for ma ! No son of P leus I but the ssue of a eng ful fiend if my name shall serve thy hus band for the murder Nay! by N eus, who begat my mother Th tis, in his hom amid the flowing w es, ne r hall k Ag memnon tou h thy da ghter no! not en to the layi g of a finger tip upon her robe else will Sipylus, that frontier town of barbarism, the cradl of those chieftains lin be henceforth a city indeed, whil Phthia s name will nowher find mention. Calchas, the seer shall rue beginnin the sacrifice with hi ba ley meal and lus tral water Why what is a seer? A man who w th luck tells th truth sometimes, with f eq ent false hoods, but when his l ck deserts him, collapses then

her walls shall Trojans stand when sea borne troops with brazen shields row in on shapely ships to the channels of the Simois eager to take Helen the sister of that heavenly pair whom Zeus begat from Priam and bear her back to Hellas by toil of Achæa s shields and spears encircling Pergamus the Phrygians town with murderous war around her stone built towers dragging men s heads backward to cut their throats and sacking the citadel of Troy from roof to base a cause of many tears to maids and Priam s wife and Helen the daughter of Zeus shall weep in bitter grief because she left her lord

Oh! ne er may there appear to me or to my chil dren s children the prospect which the wealthy Lyd ian dames and Phrygia s brides will have as at their looms they hold converse Say who will pluck this fair blossom from her ruined country tightening his grasp on lovely tresses till the tears flow? 'Tis all *throu h thee the offspring of the long necked swan* if indeed it be a true report that Leda bare thee to a winged bird when Zeus transformed himself thereto or whether in the pages of the poets fables have *carried these tales to men s ears idly out of* season

Enter ACHILLES

Achilles Where in these tents is Achæa s general? Which of his servants will announce to him that Achilles the son of Peleus is at his gates seeking him? For this delay at the Euripus is not the same for all of us there be some for instance who though still unwed have left their houses desolate and are idling here upon the beach while others are married and have children so strange the longing for this xpedition that has fallen on their hearts by Heav en s will My own just plea must I declare and who so else hath any wish will speak for himself Though I have left Pharsalia and Peleus still I linger here by reason of these light breezes at the Euripus restrain ing my Myrmidons while they are ever instant with me saying Why do we tarry Achilles? how much longer must we count the days to the start for Ilium? do something if thou art so minded else lead home thy men and wait not for the tardy action of these Atridæ

Enter CLYTAEMNESTRA

Cl Hail to thee son of the Nereid goddess! I heard thy voice from within the tent and therefore *came forth*

Ac O modesty revered! who can this lady be whom I behold so richly dowered with beauty s gifts?

Cl No wonder thou knowest me not seeing I am one thou hast never before set eyes on I praise thy reverent address to modesty

Ac Who art thou and wherefore art thou come to the mustering of the Danai—thou a woman to a fenced camp of men?

Cl The daughter of Leda I my name Clytaem nestra and my husband king Agamemnon

Ac Well and shortly answered on all important points! but it ill *befits that I should stand talking to* women.

Cl Stay why seek to fly? Give me thy hand a prelude to a happy marriage

Ac What is it thou sayest? I give thee my hand? Were I to lay a finger where I have no right I could ne er meet Agamemnon s eye

Cl The best of rights hast thou seeing it is my child thou wilt wed O son of the sea goddess whom Nereus begat

Ac What wedding dost thou speak of? words fail me lady can th wits have gone astray and art thou inventing this?

Cl All men are naturally shy in the pres nce of new relations when these remind them of their wed ding

Ac Lady I have never wooed daughter of thine nor have the sons of Atreus ever mentioned marri age to me

Cl What can it mean? thy turn now to marvel at my words *for thine are passing strange to me.*

Ac Hazard a guess that we can both do in this matter for it may be we are both correct in our statements

Cl *What! have I suffered such indignity? The* marriage I am courting has no reality it seems I am ashamed of it

Ac Some one perhaps has made a mock of thee and me pay no heed thereto make light of it

Cl Farewell I can no longer face thee with un faltering eyes after being made a liar and suffering this indignity

Ac 'Tis farewell too I bid thee lady and now I go within the tent to seek thy husband

At (*Calling through the tent door*) Stranger of the race of Æacus stay awhile! Ho there! thee I mean O goddess born and thee daughter of Leda

Ac Who is it calling through the half-opened door? what fear his voice betrays!

At A slave am I of that I am not proud for for tune permits it not

Ac Whose slave art thou? not mine for mine and Agamemnon s goods are separate

At I belong to this lady who stands before the tent a gift to her from Tyndareus her father

Ac *I am waiting tell me if thou art desirous* why thou hast stayed me

At Are ye really all alone here at the door?

Cl To us alone wilt thou address thyself come forth from the king s tent

At (*Coming out*) O Fortune and my own fore sight preserve whom I desire!

Ac That speech will save them—in the future it has a certain pompous air

Cl Delay not for the sake of touching my right hand if there is aught that thou wouldst say to me

At Well thou knowest my character and my de votion to thee and thy *children*

Cl I know thou hast grown old in the service of my house.

At Likewise thou knowest it was in thy dowry king Agamemnon received me

Cl Yes thou camest to Argos with me and hast

been more thus long time past.

A. True: and though I bear thee all goodwill, I like not thy lord so well.

Cl. Come, come, unfold what er thou hast t say.

A. Her father he that begat her is on the point of slaying the daughter with his own hand—

Cl. How? Out upon thy story, old dotard! thou art mad.

A. Severing with a sword the hapless maid's white throat.

Cl. Ah, woe is me! Is my husband haply mad?

A. Nay sane, except where thou and thy daughter are concerned; there he is mad.

Cl. What is his reason? what vengeful fiend impels him?

A. Oracles—at least so Calchas says, in order that the host may start—

Cl. Whither? Woe is me, and woe is thee, thy father's destined victim!

A. To the halls of Dardanus, that Menelaus may recover Helen.

Cl. So Helen's return then was fated to affect Iphigenia?

A. Thou knowest all: her father is about to offer thy child to Artemis.

Cl. But that marriage—what pretext had it for bringing me from home?

A. An inducement to thee to bring thy daughter cheerfully, to wed her to Achilles.

Cl. On a deadly errand art thou come, my daughter, both thou, and I, thy mother.

A. Piteous the lot of both of you—and fearful Agamemnon's venture.

Cl. Alas! I am undone; my eyes can no longer stem their tears.

A. What more natural than to weep the loss of thy children?

Cl. Whence, old man, dost say thou hadst this news?

A. I had started to carry thee a letter referring to the former writing.

Cl. Forbidding or combining to urge my bringing the child to her death?

A. Nay, forbidding it, for thy lord was then in his sober senses.

Cl. How comes it then, if thou wert really bringing me a letter, that thou dost not now deliver it to me?

A. Menelaus snatched it from me—he who caused this trouble.

Cl. Dost thou hear that, son of Peleus, the Nereid's child?

Ach. I have been listening to the tale of thy sufferings, and I am indignant to think I was used as a tool.

Cl. They will slay my child; they have tricked her with thy marriage.

Ach. Like thee I blame thy lord, nor do I view it with mere indifference.

Cl. No longer will I let shame prevent my kneeling to thee, a mortal to one goddess-born; why do I affect reserve? whose interests should I consult before my child's? (*Throwing herself before* ACHILLES)

Oh! help me, goddess-born, in my sore distress, and her that was called thy bride—in vain, 'tis true, yet called she was. For thee it was I wreathed her head and led her forth as if to marriage, but now it is to slaughter I am bringing her. On thee will come reproach because thou didst not help her; for though not wedded to her, yet wert thou the loving husband of my hapless maid in name at any rate. By thy beard, right hand, and mother too I do implore thee; for thy name it was that worked my ruin, and thou art bound to stand by that. Except thy knees I have no altar whereunto to fly, and not a friend stands at my side. Thou hast heard the cruel abandoned scheme of Agamemnon; and I, a woman, am come, as thou seest, to a camp of lawless sailor folk, bold in evil's cause, though useful when they list; wherefore if thou boldly stretch forth thine arm in my behalf, our safety is assured; but if thou withhold it, we are lost.

Ch. A wondrous thing is motherhood, carrying with it a potent spell, wherein all share, so that for their children's sake they will endure affliction.

Ach. My proud spirit is stirred to rise aloft; but it has learnt to grieve in misfortune and rejoice in high prosperity with equal moderation. For these are the men who can count on ordering all their life aright by wisdom's rules. True, there are cases where 'tis pleasant not to be too wise, but there are others, where some store of wisdom helps. Brought up in god-like Chiron's halls myself, I learnt to keep a single heart; and provided the Atridæ lead aright, I will obey them; but when they cease therefrom, no more will I obey. Nay, but here and in Troy I will show the freedom of my nature, and, as far as in me lies, do honour to Ares with my spear. Thee, lady, who hast suffered so cruelly from thy nearest and dearest, will I, by every effort in a young man's power, set right, investing thee with that amount of pity, and never shall thy daughter, after being once called my bride, die by her father's hand; for I will not lend myself to thy husband's subtle tricks; no! for it will be my name that kills thy child, although it wieldeth not the steel. Thy own husband is the actual cause, but I shall no longer be guiltless, if, because of me and my marriage, this maiden perishes, she that hath suffered past endurance and been the victim of affronts most strangely undeserved. So am I made the poorest wretch in Argos; I a thing of naught, and Menelaus counting for a man! No son of Peleus I, but the issue of a vengeful fiend, if my name shall serve thy husband for the murder. Nay! by Nereus, who begat my mother Thetis, in his home amid the flowing waves, never shall king Agamemnon touch thy daughter, no! not even to the laying of a finger-tip upon her robe; else will Sipylus, that frontier town of barbarism, the cradle of those chieftains' line, be henceforth a city indeed, while Phthia's name will nowhere find mention. Calchas, the seer, shall rue beginning the sacrifice with his barley meal and lustral water. Why, what is a seer? A man who with luck tells the truth sometimes, with frequent falsehoods, but when his luck deserts him, collapses then

and there It is not to secure a bride that I have spoken thus—there be maids unnumbered eager to have my love—no! but king Agamemnon has put an insult on me he should have asked my leave to use my name as a means to catch the child for it was I chiefly who induced Clytaemnestra to betroth her daughter to me verily I had yielded this to Hellas if that was where our going to Ilium broke down I would never have refused to further my fellow soldiers common interest But as it is I am as naught in the eyes of those chieftains and little they reck of treating me well or ill My sword shall soon know if any one is to snatch thy daughter from me for then will I make it reek with the bloody stains of slaughter ere it reach Phrygia Calm thyself then as a god in his might I appeared to thee without being so but such will I show myself for all that

Ch Son of Peleus thy words are alike worthy of thee and that sea born deity the holy goddess

Cl Ah! would I could find words to utter thy praise without excess and yet not lose the graciousness thereof by stinting it for when the good are praised they have a feeling as it were of hatred for those who in their praise exceed the mean But I am ashamed of intruding a tale of woe since my affliction touches myself alone and thou art not affected by troubles of mine but still it looks well for the man of worth to assist the unfortunate even when he is not connected with them Wherefore pity us for our sufferings cry for pity in the first place I have harboured an idle hope in thinking to have thee wed my daughter and next perhaps the slaying of my child will be to thee an evil omen in thy wooing hereafter against which thou must guard thyself Thy words were good both first and last for if thou will it so my daughter will be saved Wilt have her clasp thy knees in suppliant wise? 'Tis no maid s part yet if it seem good to thee why come she shall with the modest look of free born maid but if I shall obtain the self same end from thee without her coming then let her abide within for there is dignity in her reserve still reserve must only go as far as the case allows

Ac Bring not thou thy daughter out for me to see lady nor let us incur the reproach of the ignorant for an army when gathered together without domestic duties to employ it loves the evil gossip of malicious tongues After all should ye supplicate me ye will attain a like result as if I had ne er been supplicated for I am myself engaged in a mighty struggle to rid you of your troubles One thing be sure thou hast heard I will not tell a lie if I do that or idly mock thee may I die but live if I preserve the maid

Cl Bless thee for ever succouring the distressed!

Ac Hearken then to me that the matter may succeed

Cl What is thy proposal? for hear thee I must

Ac Let us once more urge her father to a better frame of mind

Cl He is something of a coward and fears the army too much

Ac Still argument o erthroweth argument

Cl Cold hope indeed but tell me what I must do.

Ac Entreat him first not to slay his children and if he is stubborn come to me For if he consents to thy request my intervention need go no further since this consent insures thy safety I too shall show myself in a better light to my friend and the army will not blame me if I arrange the matter by reason rather than force while should things turn out well the result will prove satisfactory both to thee and thy friends even without my interference

Cl How sensibly thou speakest! I must act as seemeth best to thee but should I fail of my object where am I to see thee again? whither must I turn my wretched steps and find thee ready to champion my distress?

Ac I am keeping watch to guard thee where occasion calls that none see thee passing through the host of Danai with that scared look Shame not thy father s house for Tyndareus deserveth not to be ill spoken of being a mighty man in Hellas

Cl Tis even so Command me I must play the slave to thee If there are gods thou for thy righteous dealing wilt find them favourable if there are none what need to toil?

Exeunt ACHILLES *and* CLYTAEMNESTRA

Ch What wedding hymn was that which raised its strains to the sound of Libyan flutes to the music of the dancer s lyre and the note of the pipe of reeds?

Twas in the day Pieria s fair tressed choir came o er the slopes of Pelion to the marriage feast of Peleus beating the ground with print of golden sandals at the banquet of the gods and hymning in dulcet strains the praise of Thetis and the son of Æacus o er the Centaurs hill down through the woods of Pelion

There was the Dardanian boy Phrygian Ganymede whom Zeus delights to honour drawing off the wine he mixed in the depths of golden bowls while along the gleaming sand the fifty daughters of Nereus graced the marriage with their dancing circling in a mazy ring

Came too the revel rout of Centaurs, mounted on horses to the feast of the gods and the mixing bowl of Bacchus leaning on fir trees with wreaths of green foliage round their heads and loudly cried the prophet Chiron skilled in arts inspired by Phœbus

Daughter of Nereus thou shalt bear a son —whose name he gave— a dazzling light to Thessaly for he shall come with an army of Myrmidon spearmen to the far famed land of Priam to set it in a blaze his body cased in a suit of golden mail forged by Hephæstus a gift from his goddess mother even from Thetis who bore him

Then shed the gods a blessing on the marriage of the high born bride who was first of Nereus daughters and on the wedding of Peleus But thee[1] will Argives crown wreathing the lovely tresses of thy hair like a dappled mountain hind brought from

[1] Iphigenia.

some rocky ca e or a heifer und filed nd staining ith blood th human throat thou h thou wert ever eared like these amid the piping and whistle of herdsmen, but at th mother s sid to be decked out da b her th brid f a son of Inachus. Where now does the face of modest or virtue a ail au ht? seein that godlessness holds sway and virtue is neglected by men and thrust behind them, la lessness o r law prevailin and mortals no longer makin common cause to keep the jealousy of gods from reachi them.

Cl. (*Re appearing from the tent.*) I ha come from the tent to look out for m husband, who went awa and left its shelter lon a o while that poor hild, m da hter hearin g f th death her father devi us for her i in tears, utteri g many keys her piteous lamentation. (*Catching sight of* AGAMEMNON.) It seems I a speakin of one not far wav for t ere is Agamemnon, who will soon be d tected in the commission of a crime against his own child.

Enter AGAMEMNON

Ag. Daughter of Leda tis lucky I ha e found thee outside the tent, to discuss w th thee in our da hter s absence subjects not suited for th ears of maidens on th ev of marria

Cl. What pra is dependent on the present crisis?

Ag. Send the maide out to join h r father for the lustral water stand the read nd barle meal t scatt w th th hand on th cleansin flam and heifers t be slain in honour f th goddess Artemis, to usher in t marriage their black blood pourin from them.

Cl. Though fair the words thou usest I know n t how I am t name th deed in terms f praise.

Come forth, my da hter f ll well thou knowest what is in thy fath r's mind take the child Orestes, th brother and bring him with thee in the folds of th robe

Enter IPHIGENIA.

Behold! s h comes in bedienc t th summons. Myself will speak the rest lik for her and me

Ag. My child, wh weepest thou and no longer lookest cheerfully? wh rt thou fixin thine eyes upon th ground nd holding th robe before them?

Cl. Alas with which f m woes shall I begi ? for I ma treat them all as first or put them last or mid wa anywhere.

Ag. How now? I find you all alik confusion and alarm in every eye.

Cl. My hu band, answer frankly the questions I ask thee

Ag. There is no ecessity t orde me I am will t be questioned

Cl. Dost thou mea t sla th child and mine

Ag. (*Starting*) Ha! these are heartless words, un arranted suspicions!

Cl. Peac ! answer me that question first.

Ag. Put fair q estion and thou shalt have a fair answer

Cl. I ha e no other q es ons to put g e me no other answers.

Ag. O fate revered, O destiny nd fortun mine!

Cl. A e and mi e and this maid s too the three share one bad fortune.

Ag. Whom ha e I injured?

Cl. Dost thou ask *me* this question? A thou ht like that tself amounts to thoughtlessness.

Ag. Ru ed! m secr t out!

Cl. I know all I ha e heard what thou art bent on doin to me Thy very silence and those frequent roans are a confession tire not th self by telling it

Ag. Lo! I am silent for if I tell thee a falsehood needs must I add effrontery to misfortune.

Cl. Well listen for I will now unfold my meaning and no longer emplo dark riddles. I the first place —to reproa h thee first w th this—it was not of my own free will but b f rce that thou didst take and wed me after sla in T ntalus, my former husband, nd dashi m babe on the ground alive when thou hadst torn him from my b east with brutal iolence Then, when those two sons of Zeus, who were likewise my brothers, came flashin on horse back to war with thee T ndareus, my aged sire rescued thee because of th suppliant pra ers, and thou in turn hadst me to wif. Once reconciled to thee upon this footin thou wilt bea me witness I ha been a blameless wife to thee and thy family chaste in lov a honour to thy house that so th coming in might be with jo and thy going out with gladness. And tis seldom man secures a wif like this, thou h th gettin of a worthless woman is no rarity

Besides three dau hters, of *one of* whom thou art heartless d pri ing me I am the mother of this son of thine It a yone asks thee thy reason for slay in her tell me, what wilt thou say? or must I say *it for thee*? It is that Menelaus may recover Helen." An honourabl exchang indeed to pay a wicked woman price n child en s lives! 'Tis buying what we most d test with what w hold most dear Again, f thou go forth with the host lea ing me in thy halls, and art lon absent t Tr y what will my feel ings be at home, dost think? when I behold each acant chair and her chamber now deserted and then sit down alone in tears, making ceaseless lam entation for her "Ah! my child he that begat thee hath slain thee himself h and no one lse, nor was t by another s hand " to thy home, after lea n such pr to be paid for t eeds now but a trifli p et xt for me and the dau hters remainin to give thee the reception it is right thou shouldst receive. I adjure thee by the gods, compel me not to sin ainst thee nor sin thyself. Go t suppose thou sacri e the child what prayer wilt thou utter when tis done what will the blessin be that thou wilt in oke upon th self as thou art sla in our dau h ter? ill r turnin maybe seeing the dis race that speed thy oing forth. Is it right that I should pray for an luck to ttend thee? Surely we should deem th gods devoid of sense f we harboured a kindly feeling towards murderers. Shalt thou embrace thy

A line here lacen ou to ffect. How wilt thou dare r re urn to thy wif nd "

children on thy coming back to Argos? Nay thou hast no right Will any child of thine e er face thee if thou have surrendered one of them to death? Has this ever entered into thy calculations or does thy one duty consist in carrying a sceptre about and marching at the head of an army? when thou might est have made this fair proposal among the Argives Is it your wish Achæans to sail for Phrygia s shores? Why then cast lots whose daughter has to die For that would have been a fair course for thee to pursue instead of picking out thy own child for the victim and presenting her to the Danai or Menelaus inasmuch as it was his concern should have slain Hermione for her mother As it is I who still am true to thee must lose my child while she who went astray will return with her daughter and live in happiness at Sparta If I am wrong in aught here in answer me but if my words have been fairly urged do not still slay thy child who is mine too and thou wilt be wise

Ch Hearken to her Agamemnon for to join in saving thy children s lives is *surely a noble deed* none would gainsay this

Ip Had I the eloquence of Orpheus my father to move the rocks by chanted spells to follow me or *to charm by speaking* whom I would *I* had resorted to it But as it is I ll bring my tears—the only art I know for that I might attempt And about thy knees in suppliant wise I twine my limbs—these limbs thy wife here bore Destroy me not before my time for sweet it is to look upon the light and force me not to visit scenes below I was the first to call thee father thou the first to call me child the first was I to sit upon thy knee and give and take the fond caress And this was what thou then wouldst say Shall I see thee my child living a happy prosperous life in a husband s home one day in a manner worthy of myself? And I in my turn would ask as I hung about thy beard whereto I now am clinging How shall I see thee? Shall I be *giving thee a glad reception in* my halls father in thy old age repaying all thy anxious care in rearing me?

I remember all we said tis thou who hast forgotten *and now wouldst take my life By Pelops I* entreat thee spare me by thy father Atreus and my *mother* here who suffers now a second time the pangs she felt before when bearing me! What have I to do with the marriage of *Paris and Helen?* why is his coming to prove my ruin father? Look upon me one glance one kiss bestow that this at least I may carry to my death as a memorial of thee though thou heed not my pleading

(*Holding up the babe* ORESTES) Feeble ally though thou art brother to thy loved ones yet add thy tears to mine and entreat our father for thy sister s life even in babes there is a natural sense of ill O father see this speechless supplication made to thee pity me *have mercy* on my tender years! Yea by thy beard we two fond hearts implore thy pity the one a babe a full grown maid the other By summing all my pleas *in one* I will prevail in what I say To gaze upon yon light is man s most cherished gift that life below is nothingness and whoso longs for death is mad Better live a life of woe than die a death of glory!

Ch Ah wretched Helen! Awful the struggle that has come to the sons of Atreus and their children *thanks to thee and those marriages of thine*

Ag While loving my own children I yet understand what should move my pity and what should not I were a madman else Tis terrible for me to bring myself to this nor less terrible is it to refuse daughter for I must fare the same Ye see the vastness of yon naval host and the numbers of bronze clad warriors from Hellas who can neither make their way to Ilium s towers nor raze the far famed citadel of Troy unless I offer thee according to the word of Calchas the seer Some mad desire possesses the host of Hellas to sail forthwith to the land of the barbarians and put a stop to the rape of wives from Hellas and they will slay my daughters in Argos as well as you and me if I disregard the goddess s behests *It is not Menelaus who hath enslaved me to* him child nor have I followed wish of his nay tis Hellas for whom I must sacrifice thee whether I will or no to this necessity I bow my head for her freedom must be preserved as far as any *help of thine* daughter or mine can go nor must they who are the sons of Hellas be pillaged of their wives by barbarian robbery AGAMEMNON *rushes from the stage*

Cl My child! Ye stranger ladies!

Woe is me for this thy death! Thy father flies surrendering thee to Hades

Ip Woe is me O mother mine! for the same strain hath fallen to both of us in our fortune No more for me the light of day! no more the beams of yonder sun! Woe for that snow beat glen in Phrygia and the hills of Ida where Priam once exposed a tender babe torn from his mother s arms to meet a deadly doom e en Paris called the child of Ida in the Phrygians town Would Priam ne er had settled him the herdsman reared amid the herds beside that water crystal clear where are fountains of the Nymphs and their meadow rich with blooming flowers where hyacinths and rose buds blow for goddesses *to gather! Hither one day came Pallas a d* Cypris of the subtle heart Hera too and Hermes messenger of Zeus—Cypris proud of the longing she causes Pallas of her prowess and *Hera of her royal marriage with king Zeus—to decide a hateful* strife about their beauty but it is my death maidens—fraught tis true with glory to the *Danai*—that Artemis has received as an offering before they begin the voyage to *Ilium*

O mother mother! he that begat me to this life of sorrow has gone and left me all alone Ah! woe is me! a bitter bitter sight for me was *Helen evil* Helen! to me now doomed to bleed and die slaughtered by an impious sire

I would this Aulis had never received in its havens here the sterns of their bronze beaked ships *the* fleet which was speeding them to *Troy and would* that Zeus had never breathed on the Euripus a wind

t stop the expedition, tempering, as he doth a d f I ent breez to different men so that some ha e j in setting sail and sorrow some and oth rs hard constraint to make some start and others stay and others furl their sails!

Full of t oub e th n it seems, is the race of mor tals, full of trouble enly and its ever F te s decree that man hould find distress.

Woe! woe t thee thou child of Tynd reus, for th ff rin and a eu ch so which thou art caus- in the Danai!

Cl I pity thee for thy tru l fate—a fate I would thou n r had t met!

I O mother that bare m I l see a throng of men n y on he

Cl. It is the goddess-born thou seest child for whom thou camest hither

I (*Coming into th tent*) Open the tent-door to me serva ts, that I may h de myself.

Cl Wh seek t fly my hild?

I I am ashamed to face Achilles.

Cl Wherefore?

Ip Th luckless ending to ur marriage causes me to feel abashed

Cl No time for affectation now in face f what has hanced Stay then reserve will do o good f onl we can——

E er ACH LLE

Ac Daughter of Leda lady of sorrows!

Cl N misnomer that

A A fea ful cry is hea d amon the Arg es.

Cl What is it tell m

A It concerns thy child

Cl An evil omen f r thy words.

Ac They say her sacrifice is necessary

Cl And is there n one to say a word against them?

A Indeed I wa in some danger myself from the tumult.

Cl In danger f what? kind si

A Of being stoned.

Cl Surely not f trying to sa e my dau hter?

A The very reason.

Cl Who would ha e dared to lay a fin on thee

A The men f H llas, o e and ll

Cl Were n t thy Myrm d warriors at thy side?

A The w re the first who t rned aga nst me

Cl My child! w ar lost undon t seems.

A Th y taunted me as the ma whom marriag ha d la ed

Cl And hat d dst thou answer th m?

A I ra ed the lif f her I meant to wed——

Cl Just so.

A Th w f h father prom sed m

Cl A and ent to f t h f om Ar os.

A But I w c m by clamor us cries.

Cl Truly the m b is a dr e musch f

A B t I wil h lp thee fo all that

Cl Wilt thou eally fi ht them single handed?

A Dost see these warr o s h e carrying my arm?

Cl. Bless thee for thy kind te tl

Ac Well I shall be blessed

Cl Then my child will not be slaughtered now?

Ac No not with my con ent at any rate.

Cl But will any of them come to lay hands on the ma d?

Ac Thousands of th m w th Odysseus at their hea !

Cl The son of Sisyphus?

Ac The very same

Cl Acti g for h mself or by the army s order?

Ac By their choice—and his own

Cl An evil choice indeed to sta n his hands in blood!

Ac But I will hold him back

Cl Will he seize and bear her hence against her will?

Ac A e by her golden ha r no doubt

Cl What must I do, when it comes to that?

Ac Keep hold of thy dau hter

Cl. Fe sure that she shall not be slain, as far as that can h lp her

Ac B he e me it w ll come to th s.

Ip Mother hear me while I speak for I see that thou art wroth with th husband to no purpose t s hard for us to persist in mpossibilit es Ou thanks are d e to thi stran er for his rea help but thou mu t also see to it that he is not reproached by the army lea i g us no better off and f mself in ol ed in trouble Listen moth er hear what thou his ha e passed across my mind I am resol ed to d e and this I fa n would do with honour dism s in from me what is mean Towards this now mother turn thy thoughts, and with me weigh how well I speak to me the whole of mighty Hellas l oks on me the pass e o er the sea depends on m the sack of Tr y and in my power it l es to check her eforth ba bar ia raids on happy H las, if ever in th days to come th y seek t seize her daughters, when o e they ha atoned by death f the violation of H len s marria by Paris All this d li erance will my death insu and my fame f r setti Hellas free will be a happy o e Besides, I have no right at all to cl n too fondly to my l f for thou d d t not bea me fo myself alone b it as a publ c blessi to L Hel las W h ci h ll countless w rriors armed with sh eld those myriads sitting at the oar find courage to atta k th foe and die f r H llas, because the r f th la d s wr ged and m one life p event all th ? What kind of justi e is th t? could I f nd a w rd in answer? Now turn we t that other po nt It is not right that this man should e t r the li ts w th all A gos or be sla n f t woman s sake B tter a si gle man should see the li ht than ten thousand w m n If Artemi is minded to take th s body am I a weak mo tal to thwart th god less? Nay that w s impossible To Hellas I resi n it offer this sac rifi e nd make a utte end of Tro This is my endur monum t marriage, moth hood and fame—all these s r to m And t i but ri ht mother that H llenes hould ri l barbarians, b t not barbarians H llenes, those be ng slaves, whi e these ar free.

children on thy coming back to Argos? Nay thou hast no right Will any child of thine ever face thee if thou have surrendered one of them to death? Has this ever entered into thy calculations or does thy one duty consist in carrying a sceptre about and marching at the head of an army? when thou mightest have made this fair proposal among the Argives

Is it your wish Achæans to sail for Phrygia s shores? Why then cast lots whose daughter has to die For that would have been a fair course for thee to pursue instead of picking out thy own child for the victim and presenting her to the Danai or Menelaus inasmuch as it was his concern should have slain Hermione for her mother As it is I who still am true to thee must lose my child while she who went astray will return with her daughter and live in happiness at Sparta If I am wrong in aught here in answer me but if my words have been fairly urged do not still slay thy child who is mine too and thou wilt be wise

Ch Hearken to her Agamemnon for to join in saving thy children s lives is surely a noble deed none would gainsay this

Ip Had I the eloquence of Orpheus my father to move the rocks by chanted spells to follow me or to charm by speaking whom I would I had resorted to it But as it is, I ll bring my tears—the only art I know for that I might attempt And about thy knees in suppliant wise I twine my limbs—these limbs thy wife here bore Destroy me not before my time for sweet it is to look upon the light and force me not to visit scenes below I was the first to call thee father thou the first to call me child the first was I to sit upon thy knee and give and take the fond caress And this was what thou then wouldst say Shall I see thee my child living a happy prosperous life in a husband s home one day in a manner worthy of myself? And I in my turn would ask as I hung about thy beard whereto I now am clinging How shall I see thee? Shall I be giving thee a glad reception in my halls father in thy old age repaying all thy anxious care in rearing me?

I remember all we said tis thou who hast forgotten and now wouldst take my life By Pelops I entreat thee spare me by thy father Atreus and my mother here who suffers now a second time the pangs she felt before when bearing me! What have I to do with the marriage of Paris and Helen? why is his coming to prove my ruin father? Look upon me one glance one kiss bestow that this at least I may carry to my death as a memorial of thee though thou heed not my pleading

(*Holding up the babe* ORESTES) Feeble ally though thou art brother to thy loved ones yet add thy tears to mine and entreat our father for thy sister s life even in babes there is a natural sense of ill O father see this speechless supplication made to thee pity me have mercy on my tender years! Yea by thy beard we two fond hearts implore thy pity the one a babe a full grown maid the other By summing all my pleas in one I will prevail in what I say

To gaze upon yon light is man s most cherished gift that life below is nothingness and whoso longs for death is mad Better live a life of woe than die a death of glory!

Ch Ah wretched Helen! Awful the struggle that has come to the sons of Atreus and their children thanks to thee and those marriages of thine

Ag While loving my own children I yet understand what should move my pity and what should not I were a madman else Tis terrible for me to bring myself to this nor less terrible is it to refuse daughter for I must fare the same Ye see the vastness of yon naval host and the numbers of bronze clad warriors from Hellas who can neither make their way to Ilium s towers nor raze the far famed citadel of Troy unless I offer thee according to the word of Calchas the seer Some mad desire possesses the host of Hellas to sail forthwith to the land of the barbarians and put a stop to the rape of wives from Hellas and they will slay my daughters in Argos as well as you and me if I disregard the goddess s behests It is not Menelaus who hath enslaved me to him child nor have I followed wish of his nay tis Hellas for whom I must sacrifice thee whether I will or no to this necessity I bow my head for her freedom must be preserved as far as any help of thine daughter or mine can go nor must they who are the sons of Hellas be pillaged of their wives by barbarian robbery AGAMEMNON *rushes from the stage*

Cl My child! Ye stranger ladies!

Woe is me for this thy death! Thy father flies, surrendering thee to Hades

Ip Woe is me O mother mine! for the same strain hath fallen to both of us in our fortune No more for me the light of day! no more the beams of yonder sun! Woe for that snow beat glen in Phrygia and the hills of Ida where Priam once exposed a tender babe torn from his mother s arms to meet a deadly doom even Paris called the child of Ida in the Phrygians town Would Priam ne er had settled him the herdsman reared amid the herds beside that water crystal clear where are fountains of the Nymphs and their meadow rich with blooming flowers where hyacinths and rose buds blow for goddesses to gather! Hither one day came Pallas and Cypris of the subtle heart Hera too and Hermes messenger of Zeus—Cypris proud of the longing she causes Pallas of her prowess and Hera of her royal marriage with king Zeus—to decide a hateful strife about their beauty but it is my death maidens—fraught tis true with glory to the Danai—that Artemis has received as an offering before they begin the voyage to Ilium

O mother mother! he that begat me to this life of sorrow has gone and left me all alone Ah! woe is me! a bitter bitter sight for me was Helen evil Helen! to me now doomed to bleed and die slaughtered by an impious sire

I would this Aulis had never received in its havens here the sterns of their bronze beaked ships the fleet which was speeding them to Troy and would that Zeus had never breathed on the Euripus a wind

Ch B h ld the ma den on her w the destro er f Il m s town and it Phrygians, with garlands twi ed bout h r head and drops of lustral water n h soon t bespri kl w th her gushin *blood* th altar f a mu de ous goddess what t me h r shapel neck sse ered

For thee fair streams f fath r s po n g and lustral aters a un sto f r thee Achæa s host s waitin es *r to ea h the citad l of Il um* But let us lebrat Artemis, the daughter f Zeus, q een amongst th gods, a f pon some happ cha c

O lad r red d light *n t h man sac fic* send o ts a t Phr gia s land the host f the H llenes to Tr s abodes f guile and gra t that Agamemnon may wreathe his head w th deathles fame a crow of fa est glory f r the spearmen f Hellas.

Er er M SSE G R

M Come f rth, O Cl taemnestra da hter of Tyndareus, from the tent to hear m ews.

Er er C YT EM ESTR

Cl I heard thy oi and am c me s sad d may and fearful dread not sure but what thou ha t ar n ed th tidings f som fresh t uble for m be sides the p ese t woe

M Na t the ould I u f ld to thee a tory stran nd mar llou bo t th ch ld

Cl Delay not th n b t peak at once.

Me Dear mistress, thou halt learn all clearly from th tset will I t ll t unless my memory fail m somewhat and c f se my ton ue ts account As soon as we rea hed the grove f A temis th hild f Zeus, and th meadows gay w th flowers, here th A haean troops were g the ed bringing th da ghter th us f thw th th Arg e host be ga assemblin b t wh n king Agam mnon saw the maid n on h wa t th gro e t be sacrifi ed h g on g oa nd t ing way his fa l t the tears b rst from his es h h ld his robe befor th m B t th maid standin close b him that be got h r pak th s w se O m father h r am I to d th biddin f eely I ffer this body of mine for my ountry nd all H llas, that y may lead me t th altar f th goddess d sa rifi me si e this is Hea en rdina Good luck be ours for h lp that I ff rd! nd ma e btain th c tor gift nd om eaint t th land of ou fathers. So th l t no f th Arg es lay hand m f I ll b el ld m eck w thout a wo d

Sh pak nd ea h ma marv lled *he heard* th ma d b unf hi speech B t s the mid t p ood T lth b u —f hi this d ty wa — d bad th host trai fr m d d ed and Cal has th see draw g sha p sword f om out ts sc bbard la d t ba k t f beat g ld c own g h maid head th whil Th the son of P leus, tak g h bask t d w th t l t al wate his ha d ran ound th altar f th goddess ut teri g these w ds, O Artemis, tho h ld f Zeus, sla f ld beasts, that h lest th dazzli g l ht mid th gloom, cept this sa rifice whi h we th host f the Achæans nd ki g Agam mnon w th us,

Fer to thee e en pure blood from a beauteous ma den s n ck and g a t us safe sailin fo o r ships and the sack of Tro t wers by our spears.

Mea time the so s of Atr us and all the host stood looking on th ground wh le the priest seiz ng h s k fe offered up a pr er and w s closely scanning the ma den s th oat to see where he *hould strike* 'T as no sl ht sorrow filled my heart a I stood by with bowed head hen l l a s d len miracle! Each o e of us d st nctly he rd th sound of a b ow but n ne saw the spot here th maiden va hed Loud l the priest cried out nd all th host took up the cry at the ght of a marv el all unlooked for due to some god s a ncy and pass ng all belief altho gh twas seen f r there upon the ground lay lured f size imm nse nd passi g fair t see ga pi out her l fe with whose blood the altar of the goddess was *thoroughly* bed ed Whe eon spake Cal has thus —h y tho canst ima e— Ye captain of th s leagued Achæan host do ye see this ict m which the goddess has set before *her altar a mou tai* roam ng h nd? Th s i more welcome to her by far than the ma d that she may not defile her altar by shedd noble blood *Gladly has sh accepted it* and s rant ng u a prosperous voyage for our at ta k on Ilium Wheref re take heart sailors, each man f you, nd wa to ur sh ps, f r to-day mu t we lea e th hollow ba s of Aul and cross the E gean ma n

Then when the sacrifi e wa wholly burnt to a hes n th blazing flame he offe ed such prayers as we e meet that th rm m ht win return but me Aga m mnon sends to t ll thee this, nd say what Hea e sent luck t his, and how he hath secured und y g fam thro hout th length of Hellas. Now I was th re myself a d speak s an e e w tness w thout a doubt thy ch ld fl w awa to the gods. A truce the to thy sor nd cease to be wr th with thy husband fo God s w s with man are not what we e pect and those whom he lo es, he keepeth saf yea fo th day hath seen thy da *hter dead* a d brought t life ga n *Exi* ME SE GER

Ch What joy to hear these tid g from the mes se e ! *He tells thee th child s living st ll* amon th gods.

Cl Wh h f th gods, my child hath t len thee? How *am I to add es thee? H* can I be sure that th s not an idl tale told to chee m to make me ease my piteou lamentat on f thee?

Ch Lo k ng Agamemno approa hes to confirm this tory f thee

En r AMEM O

Ag Happ ma we be *u ted lad* far as n rns our da ht r f he hath f llowship with god n er sooth. B t thou must take thi tend r babe and start for home f the host is loo n w t sail F thee well tis lo g I shall g et thee on my r turn fr m T oy may it be well w th thee!

Ch Son of At eus, start for Phrygia s land w th l and so r turn, I pr after taki g f om T o her fa est spoils. *Exeunt* OM ES

Ch Thou playest a noble part maiden but sickly are the whims of Fate and the goddess

Ac Daughter of Agamemnon! some god was bent on blessing me could I but have won thee for my wife In thee I reckon Hellas happy and thee in Hellas for this that thou hast said is good and worthy of thy fatherland since thou abandoning a strife with heavenly powers which are too strong for thee has fairly weighed advantages and needs But now that I have looked into thy noble nature I feel still more a fond desire to win thee for my bride Look to it for I would fain serve thee and receive thee in my halls and witness Thetis how I grieve to think I shall not save thy life by doing battle with the Danai Reflect I say a dreadful ill is death

Ip This I say without regard to anyone Enough that the daughter of Tyndareus is causing wars and bloodshed by her beauty then be not slain thyself sir stranger nor seek to slay another on my account but let me if I can save Hellas

Ac Heroic spirit! I can say no more to this since thou art so minded for thine is a noble resolve why should not one avow the truth? Yet will I speak for thou wilt haply change thy mind that thou mayst know then what my offer is I will go and place these arms of mine near the altar resolved not to permit thy death but to prevent it for brave as thou art at sight of the knife held at thy throat *thou wilt soon avail thyself of what I said* So I will not let thee perish through any thoughtlessness of thine but will go to the temple of the goddess with these arms and await thy arrival there

Exit ACHILLES

Ip Mother why so silent thine eyes wet with tears?

Cl I have reason woe is me! to be sad at heart

Ip Forbear make me not a coward here in one thing obey me

Cl Say what it is my child for at my hands thou shalt never suffer injury

Ip Cut not off the tresses of thy hair for me nor clothe thyself in sable garb

Cl Why my child what is it thou hast said? Shall I when I lose thee——

Ip Lose me thou dost not I am saved and thou renowned as far as I can make thee

Cl How so? Must I not mourn thy death?

Ip By no means for I shall have no tomb heaped o'er me

Cl What is not the act of dying held to imply burial?

Ip The altar of the goddess Zeus's daughter will be my tomb

Cl Well my child I will let thee persuade me, for thou sayest well

Ip Aye as one who prospereth and doeth Hellas service

Cl What message shall I carry to thy sisters?

Ip Put not mourning raiment on them either

Cl But is there no fond message I can give the maidens from thee?

Ip Yes my farewell words and promise me to rear this babe Orestes to manhood

Cl Press him to thy bosom 'tis thy last look

Ip O thou that art most dear to me! thou hast helped thy friends as thou hadst means

Cl Is there anything I can do to pleasure thee in Argos?

Ip Yes hate not my father thy own husband

Cl Fearful are the trials through which he has to go because of thee

Ip It was against his will he ruined me for the sake of Hellas

Cl Ah! but he employed base treachery unworthy of Atreus

Ip Who will escort me hence before my hair is torn?

Cl I will go with thee

Ip No not thou thou say'st not well

Cl I will clinging to thy robes

Ip Be persuaded by me mother stay here for this is the better way alike for me and thee but let one of these attendants of my father conduct me to the meadow of Artemis where I shall be sacrificed

Cl Art gone from me my child?

Ip Aye and with no chance of ever returning

Cl Leaving thy mother?

Ip Yes as thou seest undeservedly

Cl Hold! leave me not!

Ip *I cannot let thee shed a tear* (*Exit* CLYTAEMNESTRA *To the* CHORUS) Be it yours maidens to hymn in joyous strains Artemis the child of Zeus, for my hard lot and let the order for a solemn hush go forth to the Danai Begin the sacrifice with the baskets let the fire blaze for the purifying meal of sprinkling and my father pace from left to right about the altar for I come to bestow on Hellas safety crowned with victory Lead me hence me the destroyer of Ilium's town and the Phrygians give me wreaths to cast about me bring them hither here are my tresses to crown bring lustral water too Dance to Artemis queen Artemis the blest around her fane and altar for by the blood of my sacrifice I will blot out the oracle if it needs must be

O mother lady revered! for thee shall my tears be shed and now for at the holy rites I may not weep

Sing with me maidens sing the praises of Artemis, whose temple faces Chalcis where angry spearmen madly chafe here in the narrow havens of Aulis because of me

O Pelasgia land of my birth and Mycenae my home!

Ch Is it on Perseus' citadel thou callest that town Cyclopean workmen builded?

Ip To be a light to Hellas didst thou rear me and so I say not No to death

Ch Thou art right no fear that fame will e'er desert thee!

Ip Hail to thee bright lamp of day and light of Zeus! A different life a different lot is henceforth mine Farewell I bid thee light beloved!

Exit IPHIGENIA

Od. Odysseus of Ithaca, kin of the Cephallenians' land.

Si. I know him for a prating knave, one of Sisyphus' shrewd offspring.

Od. I am the man; abuse me not.

Si. Whence hast thou sailed hither to Sicily?

Od. From Ilium and the toils of Troy.

Si. How was that? didst thou not know the passage to thy native land?

Od. Tempestuous winds drove me hither against my will.

Si. God wot! thou art in the same plight as I am.

Od. Why, wert thou too drifted hither against thy will?

Si. I was, as I pursued the pirates who carried Bromius off.

Od. What land is this and who are its inhabitants?

Si. This is mount Ætna, the highest point in Sicily.

Od. But where are the city walls and ramparts?

Si. There are none; the headlands, sir, are void of men.

Od. Who then possess the land? the race of wild creatures?

Si. The Cyclopes, who have caves, not roofed houses.

Od. Obedient unto whom? or is the power in the people's hands?

Si. They are rovers; no man obeys another in anything.

Od. Do they sow Demeter's grain, or on what do they live?

Si. On milk and cheese and flesh of sheep.

Od. Have they the drink of Bromius, the juice of the vine?

Si. No indeed! and thus it is a joyless land they dwell in.

Od. Are they hospitable and reverent toward strangers?

Si. Strangers, they say, supply the daintiest meat.

Od. What, do they delight in *killing men and eating them*?

Si. No one has ever arrived here without being butchered.

Od. Where is the Cyclops himself? inside his dwelling?

Si. He is gone hunting wild beasts with hounds on Ætna.

Od. Dost know then what to do, that we may be gone from the land?

Si. Not I, Odysseus; but I would do anything for thee.

Od. Sell us food, of which we are in need.

Si. There is nothing but flesh, as I said.

Od. Well, even that is a pleasant preventive of hunger.

Si. And there is cheese curdled with fig-juice, and the milk of kine.

Od. Bring them out; a man should see his purchases.

Si. But tell me, how much gold wilt thou give me in exchange?

Od. No gold bring I, but Dionysus' drink.

Si. Most welcome words! I have long been wanting that.

Od. Yes, it was Maron, the god's son, who gave me a draught.

Si. What! Maron whom once I dandled in these arms?

Od. The son of the Bacchic god, that thou mayst learn more certainly.

Si. Is it inside the ship, or hast thou it with thee?

Od. This, as thou seest, is the skin that holds it, old sir.

Si. Why, that would not give me so much as a mouthful.

Od. This, and twice as much again as will run from the skin.

Si. Fair the rill thou speakest of, delicious to me.

Od. Shall I let thee taste the wine unmixed to start with?

Si. A reasonable offer; for of a truth a taste invites the purchase.

Od. Well, I haul about a cup as well as the skin.

Si. Come, let it gurgle in, that I may revive my memory by a pull at it.

Od. There then!

Si. Ye gods! what a delicious scent it has!

Od. What! didst thou see it?

Si. No, i' faith, but I smell it.

Od. Taste it then, that thy approval may not stop at words.

Si. Zounds! Bacchus is inviting me to dance; ha! ha!

Od. Did it not gurgle finely down thy throttle?

Si. Aye that it did, to the ends of my fingers.

Od. Well, we will give thee money besides.

Si. Only undo the skin, and never mind the money.

Od. Bring out the cheeses then and lambs.

Si. I will do so, with small thought of any master. For let me have a single cup of that and I would turn madman, giving in exchange for it the flocks of every Cyclops and then throwing myself into the sea from the Leucadian rock, once I have been well drunk and smoothed out my wrinkled brow. For if a man rejoice not in his drinking, he is mad; for in drinking there is love with all its frolic, and dancing withal, and oblivion of woe. Shall not I then purchase so rare a drink, bidding the senseless Cyclops and his central eye go hang? *Exit* SILENUS.

Ch. Hearken, Odysseus, let us hold some converse with thee.

Od. Well, do so; ours is a *meeting of friends*.

Ch. Did you take Troy and capture the famous Helen?

Od. Aye, and we destroyed the whole family of Priam.

Ch. After capturing your blooming prize, were all of you in turn her lovers? for she likes variety in husbands; the traitress! the sight of a man with embroidered breeches on his legs and a golden chain about his neck so fluttered her, that she left Menelaus, her excellent little husband. Would there had

THE CYCLOPS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Silenus | Odysseus
Chorus of Satyrs | The Cyclops
Mute *Companions of Odysseus*

Mount Ætna in Sicily before the cave of the Cyclops Enter SILENUS

Silenus O Bromius unnumbered are the toils I bear because of thee no less now than when I was young and hale first when thou wert driven mad by Hera and didst leave the mountain nymphs thy nurses next when in battle with earth born spear men I stood beside thee on the right as squire and slew Enceladus smiting him full in the middle of his targe with my spear Come though let me see must I confess twas all a dream? No by Zeus! since I really showed his spoils to the Bacchic god And now am I enduring to the full a toil still worse than those For when Hera sent forth a race of Tyrrhene pirates against thee that thou mightest be smuggled far away I as soon as the news reached me sailed in quest of thee with my children and taking the helm myself I stood on the end of the stern and steered our trim craft and my sons sitting at the oars made the grey billows froth and foam as they sought thee my liege But just as we had come nigh Malea in our course an east wind blew upon the ship and drove us hither to the rock of Ætna where in lonely caverns dwell the one eyed children of ocean s god the murdering Cyclopes Captured by one of them we are slaves in his house Polyphemus they call him whom we serve and instead of Bacchic revelry we are herding a godless Cyclops flocks and so it is my children striplings as they are tend the young thereof on the edge of the downs while my appointed task is to stay here and fill the troughs and sweep out the cave or wait upon the ungodly Cyclops at his impious feasts His orders now compel obedience I have to scrape out his house with the rake you see so as to receive the Cyclops my absent master and his sheep in clean caverns

But already I see my children driving their browsing flocks towards me

What means this? is the beat of feet in the Sicinnis dance the same to you now as when ye attended the Bacchic god in his revelries and made your way with dainty steps to the music of lyres to the halls of Althæa?

Enter CHORUS OF SATYRS

Chorus Offspring of well bred sires and dams, pray whither wilt thou be gone from me to the rocks? Hast thou not here a gentle breeze and grass to browse and water from the eddying stream set near the cave in troughs? and are not thy young ones bleating for thee?

Pst! pst! wilt thou not browse here here on the dewy slope? Ho! ho! ere long will I cast a stone at thee Away away! O horned one to the fold keeper of the Cyclops the country ranging shepherd Loosen thy bursting udder welcome to thy teats the kids whom thou leavest in the lambkins pens. Those little bleating kids asleep the livelong day miss thee wilt then leave at last the rich grass pastures on the peaks of Ætna and enter the fold?

Here we have no Bromian god no dances here or Bacchantes thyrsus bearing no roll of drums or drops of sparkling wine by gurgling founts nor is it now with Nymphs in Nysa I sing a song of Bacchus Bacchus! to the queen of love in quest of whom I once sped on with Bacchantes white of foot

Dear friend dear Bacchic god whither art roaming alone waving thy auburn locks while I thy minister do service to the one eyed Cyclops a slave and wanderer I clad in this wretched goat skin dress severed from thy love?

Si Hush children! and bid our servants fold the flocks in the rock roofed cavern

Ch (*To* SERVANTS) Away! (*To* SILENUS) But prithee why such haste father?

Si I see the hull of a ship from Hellas at the shore and men that wield the oar on their way to this cave with some chieftain About their necks they carry empty vessels and pitchers for water they are in want of food Luckless strangers! who can they be? They know not what manner of man our master Polyphemus is to have set foot here in his cheerless abode and come to the jaws of the cannibal Cyclops in an evil hour But hold ye your peace that we may inquire whence they come to the peak of Sicilian Ætna

Enter ODYSSEUS *and crew*

Odysseus Pray tell us sirs of some river spring whence we might draw a draught to slake our thirst or of someone willing to sell victuals to mariners in need

Why what is this? We seem to have chanced upon a city of the Bromian god here by the caves I see a group of Satyrs To the eldest first I bid All hail!

Si All hail sir! tell me who thou art and name thy country

cruel s to slay thy friends on th ir com g to thy ca e nor regard us as food for thy jaws, an impious meal for we preserved thy sire O kin n posses on of his templ seats deep in the nooks of H llas and the sacred port of Tænarus and Malea s fur thest co es remain unharmed and Sunium s rock the sil er m ed sacred to Zeus-born Ath na still is safe, and Geræstus, the harbour of r fu e and we did not permit Phrygians to put such a intolerabl reproach on Hellas Now in these things thou too hast a shar for thou dwellest in a co ner ot the land of H llas beneath Ætna s fire streaming rock and alth ou h thou turn from a guments still it is cust m m ngst m rtal m n to recei e ship-wrecked sailors as th ir suppliant and sho them hospitality and help them with raiment ot that these should fill thy ja s and belly their limbs transfixed with spits for piercing ox flesh The land of Priam hath emptied Hellas q te nough, drink ing the blood of many whom the spear laid lo with the ruin it has b ou ht n w dowed wi es, on aged childless dames, and hoary headed sires and f thou roa t and co sum the remnant—a meal th u wilt — hy where shall ne turn? Nay be per suaded by m Cyclops forego thy ra enous g eed and choose pi ty rather than wickedness for on many a man ere now unr ghteous gains have b ought down retribut

S I ll gi thee a w rd of advice! as fo his flesh, lea e n t a morsel of it and if thou eat his t gue Cyclops, th u w lt becom a mon trous clever talker

Cy Wealth, mankin is the god f r the wise all else is m r aunting and f ne wo ds. Plagu take the headland by the sea on which my fa her seats himself! Wh hast th u p t f rward these a gu m nts? I shudder ot at Zeus thunder no know I whe ein Zeus is mi ht r god than I sir stra er what is more I reck n t of him my reasons hear Wh n h pours down th rain f om above he e in this rock n quarters sn g feastin on oast calf s flesh some d gam and o tening w ll my pt rned paun h th deep draught from a tub f milk I n al the th d claps of Zeu with my ar tillery and when th orth w d blo from Thra and shed th snow I wrap my ca case in th hides of beast d li ht a fire, nd what car I f r now? The ea h pe f e wh ther she lik t or n t p o duces grass nd fatt n my flocks, wh h I sacrifi t n e sa e myself nd th bell th g eatest of deities but to the gous, n t I! F r su ely to eat and dri k one fill from da t day and gi e o eself no gri f ll thi is th ki g of god f r y wis man, but law go ha g cheq er g they do, th life f man! And so I will not cease from in dulg m self by d ouri g thee a d thou shalt e h s st a g r s gift that I may be free of blam —fir nd my fathe element y nde and ca ld n t h ld thy flesh and boil it c ly in co lops So n w th y u, that may fea t me well, tand ng ound the altar c honou the ca ern s god *Enter h s ca e*

Od Alas! escaped from the troubles of Troy and the sea my barque now strands upon the whim and forbidding hea t f th s sa age

O Pallas, mistress mine goddess-daughter of Zeus h lp me help me now for I am come to toils and d pths of peril worse th n all at Il um and thou O Zeus the stranger s god ho hast thy dwell ng m d the radiant stars, *behold these things for* if thou regard them not n va n art thou esteemed the great god Zeus though but a th ng of naught

Follo s the CYCLOPS *rel ctantly*

Ch Ope wide the portal of thy gaping throat Cycl ps f r strangers limbs, both boiled and grilled a e ready from ff the coals fo thee to gnaw and t ar and mi ce up small reclining in thy shaggy goatskin coat

Relinquish n t thy meal for me keep that boat for thy s lf alone Av unt th s ca e! avaunt the burnt-off rings, wh ch the godless Cyclops offers on Ætna s ltars, exulting in meals on strangers flesh!

Oh! the ruthless m nster! to sacrifice his guests t h s own hearth the suppliants of hi halls, clea g and teari g and ser ng up to his loathsome teeth a feast f human flesh *hot f om the coals.*

Od (*Rea p aring with a look of horror*) O Zeus! what can I say *after the hideous sights I have seen* in de the cave *things* past belief resembling more the tales men tell than aught th y do?

Ch What news, Odysseus? has the Cyclops, most godless mon ter been feasting on thy dear com rades?

Od Aye h singled out a pair on whom the flesh a fatter a d n best co d tion, and took them up in his hand t we gh

Ch H w went it w th you then poor wretch?

Od When we had entered yonder rocky abod he lighted first a fire th own logs of towen g oak upon his spac ous hearth enough for three wa gons t carry as thei load e t close by the blazing flame he placed his c uch of pine boughs laid upon the floor and filled bowl of some ten fi kins, po i g wh te milk th ere nto after he had milked h kine and by h s id he put a can of i y wood whose b eadth wa *three* cub ts a d its d pth four may be next h *set his* brazen pot a boiling on the f re spits too he set besid him fash o ed of the branches f th rn the points ha de ed in th fire a d th *rest of th m* trimmed with the hatchet nd the blood bo ls f Ætna f th axe sedg ! Now when that hell-cook god-detested had e erythi quit eady h ca ht up a pa of my companions and proceeded deliberately to cut the throat of one of th m over th sa m g b n pot b t the other he clut hed b th tendon of his heel, and str kin h m gainst a sharp po nt of ocky stone dashed out his brains then aft hacking the fleshy pa t w th glutton cleaver he set t g lling them, but the limbs he threw nto hi cauld on to seeth And I poo wretch d near with streami g eyes and wa ted on th C clops but the others kept cowe

to cat h th blood as the st ikes.

never been a race of women born into the world at all unless it were for me alone!

Re enter SILENUS

Si (*With food*) Lo! I bring you fat food from the flocks king Odysseus the young of bleating sheep and cheeses of curdled milk without stint Carry them away with you and be gone from the cave at once after giving me a drink of merry grape juice in exchange

Ch Alack! yonder comes the Cyclops what shall we do?

Od Then truly are we lost old sir! whither must we fly?

Si Inside this rock for there ye may conceal yourselves

Od Dangerous advice of thine to run into the net!

Si No danger there are ways of escape in plenty in the rock

Od No never that for surely Troy will groan and loudly too if we flee from a single man when I have oft withstood with my shield a countless host of Phrygians Nay if die we must we will die a noble death or if we live we will maintain our old renown at least with credit

Enter CYCLOPS

Cyclops A light here! hold it up! what is this? what means this idleness your Bacchic revelry? Here have we no Dionysus nor clash of brass nor roll of drums Pray how is it with my newly born lambs in the caves? are they at the teat running close to the side of their dams? Is the full amount of milk for cheeses milked out in baskets of rushes? How now? what say you? One of ye will soon be shedding tears from the weight of my club look up not down

Ch There! my head is bent back till I see Zeus himself I behold both the stars and Orion

Cy Is my breakfast quite ready?

Ch Tis laid be thy throat only ready

Cy Are the bowls too full of milk?

Ch Aye so that thou canst swill off a whole hogshead so it please thee

Cy Sheeps milk or cows milk or a mixture of both?

Ch Whichever thou wilt don t swallow me that s all

Cy Not I for you would start kicking in the pit of my stomach and kill me by your antics (*Catching sight of* ODYSSEUS *and his followers*) Ha! what is this crowd I see near the folds? Some pirates or robbers have put in here Yes I really see the lambs from my caves tied up there with twisted osiers cheese presses scattered about and old Silenus with his bald pate all swollen with blows

Si Oh! oh! poor wretch that I am pounded to a fever

Cy By whom? who has been pounding thy head old sirrah?

Si These are the culprits Cyclops all because I refused to let them plunder thee

Cy Did they not know I was a god and sprung from gods?

Si That was what I told them but they persisted in plundering thy goods and in spite of my efforts, they actually began to eat the cheese and carry off the lambs and they said they would tie thee in a three cubit pillory and tear out thy bowels by force at thy navel and flay thy back thoroughly with the scourge and then after binding thee fling thy carcase down among the benches of their ship to sell to some one for heaving up stones or else throw thee into a mill

Cy Oh indeed! Be off then and sharpen my cleavers at once heap high the fagots and light them for they shall be slain forthwith and fill this maw of mine what time I pick my feast hot from the coals waiting not for carvers and fish up the rest from the cauldron boiled and sodden for I have had my fill of mountain fare and sated myself with banquets of lions and stags but tis long I have been without human flesh

Si Truly master a change like this is all the sweeter after everyday fare for just of late there have been no fresh arrivals of strangers at these caves

Od Hear the strangers too in turn Cyclops We had come near the cave from our ship wishing to procure provisions by purchase when this fellow sold us the lambs and handed them over for a stoup of wine to drink himself—a voluntary act on both sides—there was no violence employed at all No there is not a particle of truth in the story he tells, now that he has been caught selling thy property behind thy back

Si I? Perdition catch thee!

Od If I am lying yes

Si O Cyclops by thy sire Poseidon by mighty Triton and Nereus by Calypso and the daughters of Nereus by the sacred billows and all the race of fishes! I swear to thee most noble sir dear little Cyclop master mine it is not I who sell thy goods to strangers else may these children dearly as I love them come to an evil end

Cy Keep that for thyself with my own eyes I saw thee sell the goods to the strangers and if I lie perdition catch my sire! but injure not the strangers

Cy Ye lie for my part I put more faith in him than Rhadamanthus declaring him more just But I have some questions to ask Whence sailed ye strangers? of what country are you? what city was it nursed your childhood?

Od We are Ithacans by birth and have been driven from our course by the winds of the sea on our way from Ilium after sacking its citadel

Cy Are ye the men who visited on Ilium that bordereth on Scamander s wave the rape of Helen worst of women?

Od We are that was the fearful labour we endured

Cy A sorry expedition yours to have sailed to the land of Phrygia for the sake of one woman!

Od It was a god s doing blame not any son of man But thee do we implore most noble son of Ocean s god speaking as free born men be not so

Cy. It is not right that gods should be clad in leather.

Od. What of that provided he please thee? does the leather hurt thee?

Cy. I hate the wine skin but the liquor we have here I love.

Od. Stay then, Cyclops drink and be merry

Cy. Must I not give my brethren a share in this liquor?

Od. No, keep it thyself and thou wilt appear of more honour

Cy. Give it to my friends and I shall appear of more use

Od. Revelling is apt to end in blows, abuse and strife

Cy. I may be drunk but no man will lay hands on me for all that

Od. Better stay at home my friend after a carouse

Cy. Who loves not revelling then is but a simpleton.

Od. But whoso stays at home when drunk, is wise

Cy. What shall we do, Silenus? art minded to stay?

Si. That I am for what need have we of others to share our drink, Cyclops?

Cy. Well, truly the turf is soft as down with its fresh flowering plants.

Si. (*Seating himself*) Aye, and 'tis pleasant drinking in the warm sunshine.

Cy. [1]

Si. Come let me see thee stretch thy carcase on the ground

Cy. (*Sitting down*) There then! Why art thou putting the cushion behind me?

Si. That no one passing by may come upon thee

Cy. Nay but thy purpose is to drink upon the sly set it between us. (*To Odysseus*) Now tell me stranger by what name to call thee.

Od. Noman What boon shall I receive of thee to earn my thanks?

Cy. I will feast on thee last after all thy comrades.

Od. Fair indeed the honour thou bestowest on thy guest sir Cyclops!

Cy. (*Turning suddenly to* SILENUS) Ho, sirrah! what art thou about taking a stealthy pull at the wine?

Si. No, but it kissed me for my good looks.

Cy. Thou shalt smart, if thou kiss the wine when it kisses not thee

Si. Oh! but it did for it says it is in love with my handsome face

Cy. (*Holding out his cup*) Pour in only give me my cup full.

Si. Hm! how is it mixed? just let me make sure. (*Takes another pull*)

Cy. Perdition! give it me at once.

Si. Oh, no I really cannot till I see thee with a crown on and have another taste myself.

Cy. My cup-bearer is a cheat

Si. No really but the wine is so luscious. Thou must wipe thy lips, though, to get a draught

Cy. There! my lips and beard are clean now

Si. Bend thine elbow gracefully and then quaff thy cup, as thou seest me do, and as now thou seest me not (*Burying his face in his cup*)

Cy. Aha! what next?

Si. I drunk it off at a draught with much pleasure

Cy. Stranger take the skin thyself and be my cup-bearer

Od. Well, at any rate the grape is no stranger to my hand

Cy. Come pour it in.

Od. In it goes! keep silence that is all.

Cy. A difficult task when a man is deep in his cups.

Od. Here, take and drink it off leave none

Cy. [2]

Od. Thou must be silent and only give in when the liquor does.

Cy. God wot! it is a clever stock that bears the grape.

Od. Aye and if thou but swallow plenty of it after a plentiful meal, moistening thy belly till its thirst is gone, it will throw thee into slumber but if thou leave aught behind the Bacchic god will parch thee for it

Cy. Ha! ha! what a trouble it was getting out! This is pleasure unalloyed earth and sky seem whirling round together I see the throne of Zeus and all the godhead's majesty Kiss *thee*! no! There are the Graces trying to tempt me I shall rest well enough with my Ganymede here yea by the Graces, right fairly

Si. What! Cyclops, am I Ganymede, Zeus minion?

Cy. (*Attempting to carry him into the cave*) To be sure Ganymede whom I am carrying off from the halls of Dardanus.

Si. I am undone my children outrageous treatment waits me

Ch. Dost find fault with thy lover? dost scorn him in his cups?

Si. Woe is me! most bitter shall I find the wine ere long *Exit* SILENUS, *dragged away by* CYCLOPS

Od. Up now children of Dionysus, sons of a noble sire soon will yon creature in the cave relaxed in slumber as ye see him spew from his shameless maw the meat Already the brand inside the lair is emitting a cloud of smoke and the only reason we prepared it was to burn the Cyclops eye so mind thou quit thee like a man

Ch. I will have a spirit as of rock or adamant but go inside before my father suffers any shameful treatment for here thou hast things ready

Od. O Hephæstus, lord of Ætna rid thyself for once and all of a troublesome neighbour by burning his bright eye out Come Sleep a well offspring of sable Night come with all thy power on the

[1] A line has been lost here.

[2] A line has been lost here in which the Cyclops asked And how must I drink this?"

ing like frightened birds in crannies of the rock and the blood forsook their skin Anon when he had gorged himself upon my comrades flesh and had fallen on his back breathing heavily there came a sudden inspiration to me I filled a cup of this Maronian wine and offered him a draught saying Cyclops son of Ocean s god see here what heavenly drink the grapes of Hellas yield glad gift of Dionysus He glutted with his shameless meal took and drained it at one draught and lifting up his hand he thanked me thus Dearest to me of all my guests! fair the drink thou givest me to crown so fair a feast Now when I saw his delight I gave him another cup knowing the wine would make him rue it and he would soon be paying the penalty Then he set to singing but I kept filling bumper after bumper and heating him with drink So there he is singing discordantly amid the weeping of my fellow sailors and the cave re echoes but I have made my way out quietly and would fain save thee and myself if thou wilt Tell me then is it your wish or is it not to fly from this unsocial wretch and take up your abode with Naiad nymphs in the halls of the Bacchic god? Thy father within approves this scheme but there! he is powerless getting all he can out of his liquor his wings are snared by the cup as if he had flown against bird lime and he is fuddled but thou art young and lusty so save thyself with my help and regain thy old friend Dionysus so little like the Cyclops

Ch Best of friends would we might see that day escaping the godless Cyclops! for tis long we have been without the joys of men unable to escape him

Od Hear then how I will requite this vile monster and rescue you from thraldom

Ch Tell me how no note of Asiatic lyre would sound more sweetly in our ears then news of the Cyclops death

Od Delighted with this liquor of the Bacchic god he fain would go a revelling with his brethren

Ch I understand thy purpose is to seize and slay him in the thickets when alone or push him down a precipice

Od Not at all my plan is fraught with subtlety

Ch What then? Truly we have long heard of thy cleverness

Od I mean to keep him from this revel saying he must not give this drink to his brethren but keep it for himself alone and lead a happy life Then when he falls asleep o ermastered by the Bacchic god I will put a point with this sword of mine to an olive branch I saw lying in the cave and will set it on fire and when I see it well alight I will lift the heated brand and thrusting it full in the Cyclops eye melt out his sight with its blaze and as when a man in fitting the timbers of a ship makes his auger spin to and fro with a double strap so will I make the brand revolve in the eye that gives the Cyclops light and will scorch up the pupil thereof

Ch Ho! ho! how glad I feel! wild with joy at the contrivance!

Od That done I will embark thee and those thou lovest with old Silenus in the deep hold of my black ship my ship with double banks of oars, and carry you away from this land

Ch Well can I too lay hold of the blindin brand as though the god s libation had been poured? for I would fain have a share in this offering of blood

Od Indeed thou *must* for the brand is large and thou must help hold it

Ch How lightly would I lift the load of even a hundred wains if that will help us to grub out the eye of the doomed Cyclops like a wasp s nest

Od Hush! for now thou knowest my plot in full and when I bid you obey the author of it for I am not the man to desert my friends inside the cave and save myself alone And yet I might escape I am clear of the cavern s depths already but no! to desert the friends with whom I journeyed hither and only save myself is not a righteous course

Re enters the cave

Semi Chorus I Come who will be the first and who the next to him upon the list to grip the handle of the brand and thrusting it into the Cyclops eye gouge out the light thereof?

Semi Ch II Hush! hush! Behold the drunkard leaves his rocky home trolling loud some hideous lay a clumsy tuneless clown whom tears await Come let us give this boor a lesson in revelry Ere long will he be blind at any rate

Semi Ch I Happy he who plays the Bacchanal amid the precious streams distilled from grapes stretched at full length for a revel his arm around the friend he loves and some fair dainty damsel on his couch his hair perfumed with nard and glossy the while he calls Oh! who will ope the door for me?

Enter CYCLOPS *with* ODYSSEUS *and* SILENUS

Cy Ha! ha! full of wine and merry with the feast s good cheer am I my hold freighted like a merchant ship up to my belly s very top This turf graciously invites me to seek my brother Cyclopes for a revel in the spring tide

Come stranger bring the wine skin hither and hand it over to me

Semi Ch II Forth from the house its fair lord comes casting his fair glance round him We have some one to befriend us A hostile brand is awaiting thee no tender bride in dewy grot No single colour will those garlands have that soon shall cling so close about thy brow

Od (*Returning with the wine skin*) Hearken Cyclops for I am well versed in the ways of Bacchus whom I have given thee to drink

Cy And who is Bacchus? some reputed god?

Od The greatest god men know to cheer their life

Cy I like his after taste at any rate

Od This is the kind of god he is he harmeth no man

Cy But how does a god like being housed in a wine skin?

Od Put him where one may he is content there

thou wouldst surely pay for this, tossing on the sea for many a day.

Od. Go hang! Even as I say, so have I done. And now will I get me to the beach and start my hollow ship across the sea of Sicily to the land of my fathers.

Cy. Thou shalt not; I will break a boulder off this rock and crush thee, crew and all, beneath my throw. Blind though I be, I will climb the hill, mounting through yonder tunnel.

Ch. As for us, henceforth will we be the servants of Bacchus, sharing the voyage of this hero Odysseus.

Exeunt omnes.

monster god detested and never after Troy's most glorious toils destroy Odysseus and his crew by the hands of one who recketh naught of God or man else must we reckon Chance a goddess and Heaven's will inferior to hers *ODYSSEUS re enters the cave*

Ch Tightly the pincers shall grip the neck of him who feasts upon his guest for soon will he lose the light of his eye by fire already the brand a tree's huge limb lurks amid the embers charred

Oh! come ye then and work his doom pluck out the maddened Cyclops' eye that he may rue his drinking And I too fain would leave the Cyclops' lonely land and see king Bromius ivy crowned the god I sorely miss Ah! shall I ever come to that?

Od (*Leaving the cave cautiously*) Silence ye cattle! I adjure you close your lips make not a sound! I'll not let a man of you so much as breathe or wink or clear his throat that yon pest awake not until the sight in the Cyclops' eye has passed through the fiery ordeal

Ch Silent we stand with bated breath

Od In then and mind your fingers grip the brand for it is splendidly red hot

Ch Thyself ordain who first must seize the blazing bar and burn the Cyclops' eye out that we may share alike whate'er betides

Semi Ch I Standing where I am before the door I am too far off to thrust the fire into his eye

Semi Ch II I have just gone lame

Semi Ch I Why then thou art in the same plight as I for somehow or other I sprained my ankle standing still

Od Sprained thy ankle standing still?

Semi Ch II Yes and my eyes are full of dust or ashes from somewhere or other

Od These are sorry fellows worthless as allies

Ch Because I feel for my back and spine and express no wish to have my teeth knocked out I am a coward am I? Well but I know a spell of Orpheus a most excellent one to make the brand enter his skull of its own accord and set alight the one eyed son of Earth

Od Long since I knew thou wert by nature such an one and now I know it better I must employ my own friends but though thou bring no active aid cheer us on at any rate that I may find my friends emboldened by thy encouragement

Exit ODYSSEUS

Ch That will I do the Carian[1] shall run the risk for us and as far as encouragement goes let the Cyclops smoulder

What ho! my gallants thrust away make haste and burn his eye brow off the monster's guest devouring Oh! singe and scorch the shepherd of Ætna twirl the brand and drag it round and be careful lest in his agony he treat thee to some wantonness

Cy (*Bellowing in the cave*) Oh! oh! my once bright eye is burnt to cinders now

Ch Sweet indeed the triumph song pray sing it to us Cyclops

Cy (*From within*) Oh! oh! once more what outrage on me and what ruin! But never shall ye escape this rocky cave unpunished ye worthless creatures for I will stand in the entrance of the cleft and fit my hands into it thus

Staggering to the entrance

Ch Why dost thou cry out Cyclops?

Cy I am undone.

Ch Thou art indeed a sorry sight

Cy Aye and a sad one too

Ch Didst fall among the coals in a drunken fit?

Cy Noman has undone me

Ch Then there is no one hurting thee after all.

Cy Noman is blinding me

Ch Then art thou not blind

Cy As blind as thou forsooth

Ch How pray could no man have made thee blind?

Cy Thou mockest me but where is this Noman

Ch Nowhere Cyclops

Cy It was the stranger vile wretch! who proved my ruin that thou mayst understand rightly by swilling me with the liquor he gave me

Ch Ah! wine is a terrible foe hard to wrestle with

Cy Tell me I adjure thee have they escaped or are they still within?

Ch Here they are ranged in silence taking the rock to screen them

Cy On which side?

Ch On thy right

Cy Where?

Ch Close against the rock Hast caught them?

Cy Trouble on trouble! I have run my skull against the rock and cracked it

Ch Aye and they are escaping thee

Cy This way was it not? 'Twas this way thou saidst

Ch No not this way

Cy Which then?

Ch They are getting round thee on the left

Cy Alas! I am being mocked ye jeer me in my evil plight

Ch They are no longer there but facing thee that stranger stands

Cy Master of villainy where oh! where art thou?

Od Some way from thee I am keeping careful guard over the person of Odysseus

Cy What a new name! hast changed thine?

Od Yes Odysseus the name my father gave me But thou wert doomed to pay for thy unholy feast for I should have seen Troy burned to but sorry purpose unless I had avenged on thee the slaughter *of my comrades*

Cy Woe is me! 'tis an old oracle coming true yes it said I should have my eye put out by thee on thy way home from Troy but it likewise foretold that

1 i.e. to let some one whose life is less valuable run the risk instead of doing so oneself The Carians being the earliest mercenaries were commonly selected for any very dangerous enterprise and so this proverb arose

THE PLAYS OF

ARISTOPHANES

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ARISTOPHANES

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Aristophanes, c. 445–c. 380 B.C.

Aristophanes, the son of Philippus of the tribe Pandionis in the deme Cydathene, was almost certainly a full Athenian citizen by birth. The exact year of his birth is not known. However, his first play, the *Banqueters*, won the second prize in 427 B.C., and he must then have been less than eighteen years of age, since, as he notes in the *Clouds*, he was too young to produce it in his own name.

It is inferred from his comedies that Aristophanes passed much of his boyhood in the country. His family owned land in Aegina which may have been acquired when that island was expropriated by Athens in 431. His political sympathies, as revealed in the plays, seem to be conservative and to favor the ancestral democracy of the landowning class.

The character of the Old Comedy, to which most of Aristophanes' plays belong, made it almost inevitable for him to enter into political disputes. Comedy then served something of the function of a satirical censorship and was expected to deal with the issues and personalities before the public. Aristophanes' first play was concerned with the contrast between the old and the new systems of education. His second, the *Babylonians*, although like the first no longer extant, is known to have involved Aristophanes in his quarrel with Cleon, which lasted until the demagogue's death in 422. In this play Aristophanes attacked the policy towards the allies of Athens in the Peloponnesian War as one that made slaves, or Babylonians, of them. Cleon responded by subjecting Aristophanes to prosecution and accused him among other things of falsely claiming the privileges of citizenship. The poet was acquitted but only after, as he charged in the *Acharnians*, Cleon had "lugged and lied and slandered and betongued me, till I well nigh was done to death." This treatment failed to daunt Aristophanes. Two years later, in the *Knights* (424), he made his most bitter attack upon Cleon, who then enjoyed his greatest popularity, and the play won the first prize in the contest of that year.

The dramatic career of Aristophanes lasted for forty years or more, extending from the time when Athens was at the height of its power in the first years of the Peloponnesian War, through its fall in 404, and into the period when the city had begun to recover its fortunes after the Athenian league of 395. The various attempts made during that time to restrict the freedom of comedy are reflected to some extent in the character of Aristophanes' work. He wrote somewhere between forty and sixty plays, eleven of which have survived. The oldest surviving play is the *Acharnians*, which won first place in 425. The *Knights* was victorious the following year; the *Clouds*, produced in 423, although much admired by its author, failed to win a prize. With the *Wasps* Aristophanes again took first place in 422. The *Peace* (421) and the *Birds*, produced seven years later, were awarded second prize. The *Lysistrata* and the *Thesmophoriazusae* belong to 411. The *Frogs* (405) was produced when Athens was making her last effort in the Peloponnesian War. The *Ecclesiazusae* was presented around 392, and the *Plutus* (388), which is the last of the extant plays, already belongs to the so-called "Middle Comedy."

Despite his frequent and bitter attacks upon such idols of the Athenian populace as Cleon and Euripides, Aristophanes appears to have been widely appreciated throughout his long career. Plato is known to have been particularly fond of his plays. He included the comic poet in his *Symposium*, and a copy of Aristophanes is said to have been found on his deathbed. The story is also told that when asked by Dionysius of Syracuse for an analysis of the Athenian constitution, Plato sent an edition of Aristophanes' plays.

Aristophanes produced a play for the last time in 388. The following year his son, Araros, won the first prize with one of his father's plays. Since Araros was producing his own plays by 375, it has been inferred that Aristophanes died somewhere between 385 and 375 B.C.

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P E DO-AR B S
TH O L
W FE F DIC EOPOLIS
D UGHTER OF DI AEOPOLI
C PHISO I O *servant of Eur pides*
EU IPI S
L M HU
A M GARI N
TWO YO G GIRLS *daughters of the Megaria*
AN I FORMER
A BO OTIAN
NIC RCI US
S RVANT OF L M CHUS
A F RM R
A G OOMS N
M SS NG R
C O US OF ACH R I N CH RCOAL BUR ERS

I the b kgro nd are three ho ises the central o e that of DIC E POLI *the other t o those of* E R P IDES *a d* LAM CHUS *In the foregrou d is a ro gh representa. f th Pnyx where* D C EOPOLIS *is awa g th ope g f the Assembly*

Dicaeopol What heaps f thing hav bitten
me t the h rt!
A small few pleased m ers few just f ur
But those that exed w sa d-d ne h ndredfold
Let see hat pleased m wo th my gladf lness?
I know a thi g t ch ed my hea t to see
T a th se f t le ts omited p by Cleon
At that I brightened nd I lo the Knight
F that pe forma t as of pri e to Hellas.
Th n I d t c e so w wh n I looked
W th pen mouth f Aeschylus, nd lo,
Th Cr e caled Bri o you pla Theognis.
Judg what a i s hock that ga my hea tl
N t pleased I a wh Mosch s left nd
De theu c m th h Boeotian so
B t h his ea l ea ly cracked my neck
Whe in sl pped Cha ri fo th Orthian me
B t e et si fi t I wa hed my face
W I so b tt — m brows w th soap
A w h h th fi ed Assembly Day
And m m d noo e in th Pn x
Th r th Ag hatt ring p nd d wn
Sc g t dod th rmeil t tu ed co d.
Wh e th Pryt s r n th ! They ll come
Lo ft t m lbo g each oth josth
I th f t be h, t eam dow all to ther
Y ea h k how B t for maki g Peace
Th d t ca y t O City City!
B I m l a s first of ll to ome
And h I t k my seat then all alon
I th tim complai va ni g tr tching
I t l t nt twit h hairs out d m ms,

A rope used sweep lo erers from the Agora.

Gaze fondly country wards, long ng for Peace
Loathi the town sick for my llage home
Which ne er cried Come bu my charcoal " or
My vinegar my oil my a ything
But freely gave us all no *buy* word there
So he e I m waiting tho ughly prepared
To not wra gle i terrupt the speakers
Whene er they speak of any thing but Peace
—B t here they come ou noon-day Prytanes!
Aye there they go! I told ou how twould be
E ery on jostl g for the fo emost place
Crier M e forward all
Mo e up within the consecrated l ne
Amphitheus (*er ers g a violent hurry*) Speaking begun?
Cr Wh will address the meeting?
Am I
Cr Who are *you*?
Am Amphithe s.
Cr Not a man?
Am No, a immortal Fo the first Amphitheus
Wa f Demeter a d Triptol mus
The so hi son was Cele s Celeus married
Phaenarete wh ba my sir Lycinus
Hen I m mmortal and the god c mmitted
To me alone th makin peac w th Sparta
B t tho gh mmortal I e no jou ney mo ey
Th Prytanes won t pro d it
Cr Archers, there!
Am (*the rchers set e h m*) O h lp me Celeu !
h lp Tript l mu !
Di Y w g the A sembl Prytanes, ye do
wr it
Hali ga ay a man wh only wants
To g e us Pea e a d ha gin p of sh ld
Th archers t l ase AMPHITH
Cr Sit! Take y u seat
D By Apollo, no not I
Unless e prytanize about the Peace
Cr O yes! The Ambassadors from the Great King!

Enter clad in gorgeous Oriental apparel the envoys sent to the Persian court eleven years previously in the archonship of Euthymenes 437–6 B C

Di What King! I m sick to death of embassies
And all their *peacocks* and *their impositions*

Cr Keep silence!

Di Hey! Ecbatana here s a show

Ambassador Ye sent us envoys to the Great King s Court
Receiving each two drachmas daily when
Euthymenes was Archon

Di (*aside*) O me the drachmas!

Amb And weary work we found it sauntering on
Supinely stretched in our luxurious litters
With awnings o er us, through Caystrian plains
Twas a bad time

Di (*aside*) Aye the good time was mine
Stretched in the litter on the ramparts here!

Amb And oft they feted us and we perforce
Out of their gold and crystal cups must drink
The pure sweet wine

Di (*aside*) O Cranaan city mark you
The insolent airs of these ambassadors?

Amb For only *those are there accounted men*
Who drink the hardest and who eat the most

Di (*aside*) As *here* the most debauched and dissolute

Amb In the fourth year we reached the Great King s Court
But he with all his troops had gone to sit
An eight months session on the Golden Hills!

Di (*aside*) Pray at what time did he conclude his session?

Amb At the full moon and so came home again
Then he too feted us and set before us
Whole pot baked oxen—

Di (*aside*) And who ever heard
Of pot baked oxen? Out upon your lies!

Amb And an enormous bird three times the size
Of our Cleonymus its name was—Gull

Di (*aside*) That s why you gulled us out of all those drachmas!

Amb And now we bring you Pseudo Artabas[1]
The Great King s Eye

Di O how I wish some raven
Would come and strike out yours the Ambassador s

Cr O yes! the Great King s Eye!

Enter PSEUDO ARTABAS

Di O Heracles!
By Heaven my man you wear a war ship look!
What! Do you round the point and spy the docks?
Is that an oar pad underneath your eye?

Amb Now tell the Athenians Psuedo Artabas
What the Great King commissioned you to say

Pseudo Artabas Ijisti boutti furbiss upde rotti[2]

Amb Do you understand?

Di By Apollo no not I

Amb He says the King is going to send you gold
(*to* PSEUDO ARTABAS) Be more distinct and clear about the gold

P A No getti goldi nincompoop Iawny

Di Wow but that s clear enough!

Amb What does he say?

Di He says the Ionians must be nincompoops
If they re expecting any gold from Persia

Amb No no he spoke of golden income coupons

Di What income coupons? You re a great big liar!
You get away I ll test the man myself
(*to* PSUEDO ARTABAS)
Now look at this (*showing his fist*) and answer Yes or No!
Or else I ll dye you with a Sardian dye
Does the Great King intend to send us gold?
(PSEUDO ARTABAS *nods dissent*)
Then are our envoys here bamboozling us?
(*He nods assent*)
These fellows nod in pure Hellenic style
I do believe they come from hereabouts
Aye *to be sure* why *one of these two eunuchs*
Is Cleisthenes Sibyrtius s son!
O thou young shaver of the hot souled rump
With such a beard thou monkey dost thou come
Tricked out amongst us in a eunuch s guise?
And who s this other chap? *Not Straton surely?*

Cr St! Take your seat! O yes!
The Council ask the Great King s Eye to dinner
At the Town Hall

Exit Ambassadors and PSEUDO ARTABAS

Di Now is not that a throttler?
Here must I drudge at soldiering while these *rogues*
The Town Hall door is never closed *to them*
Now then I ll do a great and startling deed
Amphitheus! Where s Amphitheus?

Am Here am I

Di Here be eight drachmas *take them and* withal
The Lacedaemonians make a private peace
For me my wife and children none besides.
(*to the* PRYTANES *and citizens*)
Stick to your embassies and befoolings you

Exit AMPHITHEUS

Cr O yes! Theorus from Sitalces!

Theorus (*rising*) Here!

Di O here s another humbug introduced

Th We should not sirs *have tarried long in* Thrace—

Di But for the salary you kept on drawing

Th But for the storms which covered Thrace with snow
And froze the rivers *Twas about the season*
At which Theognis was performing here
I all that time was drinking with Sitalces
A most prodigious Athens lover he
Yea such a true admirer he would scribble
On every wall *My beautiful Athenians* !

[1] *A taba* a Persian measure Thus Pseudo-Artabas signifies one who gives false measure

[2] This jumble is supposed to mean I have just begun to repair what is rotten

Has son, our newly mad Athenian longed
T taste his Apaturia sausages,
And bad his father h lp his fatherland
And he w th deep libations, vowed to help us
W th such an host that e ery one would say
"Hea ens! what a swarm of locu ts comes thus way!"
Di Hang me if I believe a singl word
Of all that speech, exc pt bout the locusts.
Th And here he sends you the most warlike tribe
Of al in Thrace.
Di. Come, here s proof positi e
G The Thracians whom Theorus brought come forward!
Di What the plague this?
Th The Odomantian host.
Di Th Odomantians, pho! Hallo, look here
Are Odomantian all equipped l k thi ?
Th. Gi e them two drachmas each a day and these
Will targeteer Boeotia all to b ts.
Di Two drachmas for *these* scarecrows! Oh, our tars,
Our noble tars, the safegua d f our state
Well ma they groan at this. O! Mu de ! O!
These Odomantian thieves have sacked my garlic
Put down the garlic! drop t!
Th You rapscallion
How dare you touch them when they re ga lic primed
Di O will you let them, Pryt es, use me thus,
B barians too, n this m fathe land?
B t stop I warn you ot t hold the Assembly
Abo t th Thracians pa I tell you there s
A port t com I f lt a dr p of rain!
G Th Thra ian re t go, and two days hence
Come here ain. Th Assembly dissol ed
Exeunt all but DICAEOPOLIS
Di O me, th salad I ha e lost this day!
B t her Amphitheus, back from Lacedaemon
Well met, Amphitheus!
En er AMPHITH s
Am. N t till I don running
I need must flee th Acharnians, clean way
Di What mean you?
Am I wa bring g back in haste
The t eat es, when som terans sm lt th m out
Acharnians, men f Marathon hard in grain
As heir own oak nd maple rough and tough
And all t once th y cried O lla n, da e you
Bring trea ies when our in ard ar cut d wn?
Th in their lappet p the gathered tones
I fled a ay they f llowed oar g fter
Di So l t them roar B t ha you g t the treaties?
Am O es, I ha e. Three samples he they are.
These th *fi* *year* t eaties take and taste them
D Ph gh
Am What the matter?
Di I don t like th things,
They smell of tar and na al preparations.
Am Then taste the *ten-year* samples here they are
Di These smell of embassies to ll the states
U gent as if the All es are hangin back.
Am Th en here are treaties both by land and sea
For *thirty* years.
D O Feast of D onysus!
These ha e a smell of nectar and ambrosia
And never mind about the three days rations,
And in your mouth they say Go where you please
These d I w lcome these I pour and drain
Nor care a hang about our old Acharnians.
But I r leased from War and War s alarms,
Will hold w thin the Rural Dionysia
Am And I will flee those peppery old Acharnians.
Exeunt DICAEOPOLIS *a d* AMPHITH EUS
Enter run ng n pursuit f AM HITH US *twen-y-four old Acharn, ns ho constitute the* CHORUS.

Chorus Here s the trail pursue pursue him
follow follow e ery man
Question whosoe er meets you
whitherward the fellow ran
Mu h it boots the state to catch him!
(to the a dience) O inform me if ye know
Whe e the man who bears the treaties
managed from my si ht to go.
Fled and gone! Disappears!
O this weary weight of years!
O were I Now as spry
As in youthful days gone by
When I stuck Like a man
To Phayllus as he ran
And achieved Second place In the race
Though a great Cha coal freight
I was bear g on my head,—
N t so light From my si ht
H d this treaty bearer fled
Nor escaped W th his chase From the chas..
Now because my joints ha e stiff ned
and my shins are youn, no more,
And th legs of Lacratides
by old ag a e burdened sore
He s escaped u ! But we ll follow
but he hall n t boa t that he
G t away f m u Achar ians,
howsoe er old we be.
Who has da ed F ther Zeus!
Gods of hea en! t make a truce,
Who has pled d Faith with those
Who are evermore my foes
Upon whom War I make
For my ruined vineyard s sake
And I ne e From the strife W ll gi e o er
No, I n er Will forbear
Till I pierce them in retur
Like reed Sharply barbed
Dagger poi ted and they learn
N t to t ead Down m res Any more
Now tis ours to seek the fellow
and Peltene-wards to look,

And from land to land to chase him
till we bring the rogue to book
Never shall I tire of pelting
pelting him to death with stones
Di (*within*) Keep ye all the holy silence!
Ch Hush! we ve got him Heard ye comrades
silence called in solemn tones?
This is he the man we re seeking
Stand aside and in a trice
He methinks will stand before us
coming out to sacrifice!
Di (*coming out followed by his* WIFE *and* DAUGHTER) Keep ye all the holy silence!
Now basket bearer go you on in front
You Xanthias hold the phallus pole erect
Wife Set down the basket girl and we ll begin
Daughter O mother hand me here the gravy spoon
To ladle out the gravy o er the cake
Di Tis well Lord Dionysus grant me now
To show the show and make the sacrifice
As thou would st have me I and all my house
Then keep with joy the Rural Dionysia
No more of soldiering now And may this Peace
Of thirty summers answer to my hopes
Wi O daughter bear the basket sweetly sweet
With savory eating look Happy the man
Whoe er he is who weds thee and begets
Kittens as fair and saucy as thyself
Move on! but heed lest any in the crowd
Should nibble off unseen thy bits of gold
Di O Xanthias walk behind the basket bearer
Holding you two the phallus pole erect
And I ll bring up the rear and sing the hymn
Wife watch me from the roof Now then proceed

(*singing*) O Phales comrade revel roaming
Of Bacchus wanderer of the gloaming
Of wives and boys the naughty lover
Here in my home I gladly greet ye
Six weary years of absence over
For I have made a private treaty
And said good bye to toils and fusses
And fights and fighting Lamachuses

Far happier tis to me and sweeter
O Phales Phales some soft glade in
To woo the saucy arch deceiving
Young Thratta (Strymodore his maiden)
As from my woodland fells I meet her
Descending with my fagots laden
And catch her up and ill entreat her
And make her pay the fine for thieving

O Phales Phales come and sup
And in the morn to brace you up
Of Peace you ll quaff a jovial cup
And mid the chimney sparks our useless shield
we ll hang

Ch That s the man who made the treaty
There he stands Full in view
Pelt him pelt him pelt him pelt him
Pelt him you! Pelt him you!
Di Heracles! what ails the fellows?
Hang it all ye ll smash the pot!
Ch It is *you* we will smash with our
stones you detestable head
Di O most worshipful Acharnians
why? what reason have ye got?
Ch Dare you ask? Traitor base!
Dare you look me in the face?
You who make You alone
Private treaties of your own!
Shameless heart! Shameless hand!
Traitor to your fatherland!
Di But ye know not why I did it
hear me now the facts declare
Ch Hear you? No! You re to die
Neath a stony cairn to lie!
Di Not O not until ye ve heard me
worthy sirs forbear forbear!
Ch No delay! Thee to slay
We ll immediately begin
No debate! Thee we hate
Worse than Cleon s self whose skin
I ll ere long Cut to shoes
For the worthy Knights to use
But from *you* who made a treaty
with the false Laconian crew
I will hear no long orations
I will surely punish you
Di Worthy fellows for the moment
those Laconians pretermit
Tis a question of my treaty
was I right in making it
Ch Right to make it! when with Sparta
no engagement sacred stand
Not the altar not the oath pledge
not the faith of clasped right hands!
Di Yet I know that these our foemen
who our bitter wrath excite
Were not always wrong entirely
nor ourselves entirely right
Ch Not entirely shameless rascal?
Do you such opinions dare
Openly to flaunt before me?
Shall I then a traitor spare?
Di Not entirely not entirely!
I can prove by reasons strong
That in many points the Spartans
at our hands have suffered wrong
Ch This is quite a heart perplexing
terrible affair indeed
If you mean that you will venture
for our enemies to plead
Di Aye and if I plead not truly
or the people doubt display
On a chopping block I m willing
whilst I speak my head to lay
Ch Why so slack my fellow burghers?
Let us stone the naughty varlet
Let us scarify and shred him
to an uniform of scarlet

Di What a red and dan e ous ember
sparkled up w thin you then!
Won t you hear me w n t y u hear me
good Achar ians, worthy men?
Ch Never ne er will we hear you.
Di That will cause me bitter woe
Ch Il d perd t on seize me!
Di O Acharnians, say not so
Ch Know that you must d e th s instant
Di Then I ll make you suffer too
F r m safety I e a hostage
on that s very dear to you
No I'll bring him t a d lay h m
y u hall see your darling s e d
c *opolis g es to the h use a d retur s three*
h s later rry g one h d a hamper full
of charcoal d th ther a d arm swo d

Ch O Acharnia f llow burghe s,
what ca words l k these port nd
To our oble band f brethre ?
Th k you that the man can h ld
An child f urs dura e?
What ca make him wa so bold?
D Now the pelt me h re th hosta !
I will lay and w ll n t spare
I hall speedily disco e
which f yo f r charcoal ca e
Ch Hea n pres, ve u! tis a scuttle,
t my fellow b ghe tru l
N t do the th me t on
e e do O e erd!
Di Cry loud I m goi g t la him
I shall th r hear n heed
Ch You will la then this cha coal ad r
t eq al years!
Di A e f r when I cra ed heari g
ou ef sed to hea me plead
Ch Ah! but ow! Now you ma !
Whatsoe r suits u sa
Sa ou lo Sa ou priz
O d tested enemies
N er ill I F thless p
To th scuttle whi h I lo e
Di Well th fi t th t es g th ed
th th *m o t* po th g und
Ch Out th go! All m hoa d!
Proth la ide the w rd
D B t I fea that lappe
othe m siles may be found
Ch All ar g e! E !
Se my garm nt hak wa d l
Don t ade Pr mise mad
La O lay the sw rd sid
H m be Shaken out
A l tw t nd twirl about
D Y u w uld th n would you, hak your
ties l ft
A d this P esia ha oal ll b t d ed
Sa b th mad es f t f llow bu ghers.
A d ts f ght his sc ttle cuttl w se,
V ed t k bl kness on my lothes.

Alas that men should carry hearts as sour
As *unripe grapes*, to pelt and roar nor hear
A t mpered statement mi gled half and half
Not thou h I m will o er a cl opping block
To say m say for Lacedaemon s f lk
A d yet I lo e be sure my o n dear l fe
Dic *eo* *oes exits t house*
Ch O why not bring the block
out of doo s w thout delay
And speak the m hty speech
which you th nk will win the day?
For really I' e a l nging
to hear what you will say!
So in th fa hion you yourself p escribed
Place here the ch ppin block a d start your
speech
D (*re-er ers g with a block*) Well look and see,
th ch pp ng block is here
And I m t speak, poor little frie dless I
Still ne er m nd I w n t enshi ld myself
I ll speak my m d for Lacedaemo s f lk
A d yet I fe r f r well I know the moods
Of our good c untry people how they love
To l ear the City a d themsel es bepraised
By some ntri uin humbu ht or wron
N r er dream th y are bei g bo ght and sold
A d well I k th m nds of those ld men
Look n fo nothi b t a e d et bite
A e nd I know what I myself ndu ed
At Cleo ha d fo last ye s Comedy
H t the Cou cil ho se he haled me off
A d sla ged a d lied nd sla dered and
beto gued m
Roari Cy loborus wise t ll well ni h
Wa d n to death bemiry slu h fied
N w the f r suff r me bef r I start
To dress me p the loathliest way I can
Ch O why k p puttin ff with that hilly
shally ?
H onymu may lend ou f ny th ng I care
The ha g Cap f Darkness from his tangle
m tted hair
Th n ope all th wiles f S yph s,
S th encou te will not brook d lay
D Now mu t my h rt be t o g d I depart
T find Eu pides. Bo ! H the e boy!
Ceph ph Who calls m ?
Di I Euripides within?
Ce W th n and t w th f you c cei e me.
D W th and n t within?
Ce 'Tis e *n so.*
H mind w tho t is ulli g flow rs f song
But h w th is sitt g up al ft
W u g a play
D O l cky l cky poet,
Whose ery servant says su h clever things!
But call h m.
Ce But t can t be d e
D But till I
For go I w t. I ll hammer t the doo
Euripides, m sweet one!
O f you er hearkened hearken ow

Tis I Cholleidian Dicaeopolis
Euripides But I ve no time
Di But pivot ¹
Eu But it can t be done
Di But still
Eu Well then I ll pivot but I can t come down
Di Euripides!
The eccyclema turns
Eu Aye
Di Why do you write up there
And not down here? That s why you make lame heroes
And wherefore sit you robed in tragic rags
A pitiful garb? That s why you make them beggars
But by your knees Euripides I pray
Lend me some rags from that old play of yours
For to the Chorus I to-day must speak
A lengthy speech and if I fail tis *death*
Eu *Rags! Rags! what rags? Mean you the rags wherein*
This poor old Oeneus came upon the stage?
Di Not Oeneus no a wretcheder man than he
Eu Those that blind Phoenix wore?
Di Not Phoenix no
Some other man still wretcheder than Phoenix
Eu What shreds of raiment can the fellow mean?
Can it be those of beggarly Philoctetes?
Di One far far far more beggarly than he
Eu Can it be then the loathly gaberdine
Wherein the lame Bellerophon was clad?
Di Bellerophon? no yet mine too limped and *begged*
A terrible chap to talk
Eu I know the man
The Mysian Telephus
Di Telephus it is!
Lend me I pray that hero s swaddling clothes
Eu Boy fetch him out the rags of Telephus
They lie above the Thyestean rags
Twixt those and Ino s
Ce (*to* DICAEOPOLIS) Take them here they are
Di (*holding up the tattered garment against the light*)
Lord Zeus whose eyes can pierce through everywhere
Let me be dressed the loathliest way I can
Euripides you have freely given the rags
Now give I pray you what pertains to these
The Mysian cap to set upon my head
For I ve to day to act a beggar s part
To be myself yet not to seem myself
The audience there will know me who I am
Whilst all the Chorus stand like idiots by
The while I fillip them with cunning words
Eu Take it you subtly plan ingenious schemes
Di To thee good luck to Telephus—what I wish him!
Yah! why I m full of cunning words already

¹ i e show yourself by me[ans] of the eccyclem[a] a piece of machinery by wh ch the [w]all of th[e] house is turned as if on a p vot disclosing th[e] i[nterior]

But now methinks, I need a beggar s staff
Eu Take this and get thee from the marble halls
Di O Soul thou seest me from the mansion thrust
Still wanting many a boon Now in thy prayer
Be close and instant Give Euripides
A little basket with a hole burnt through it
Eu What need you hapless one of this poor wicker?
Di No need perchance but O I want it so.
Eu Know that you re wearisome and get you gone
Di Alas! Heaven bless you as it blessed your mother
Eu Leave me in peace
Di Just one thing more but one
A little tankard with a broken rim
Eu Here Now be off You trouble us begone
Di *You know not yet what ill you do yourself*
Sweet dear Euripides but one thing more
Give me a little pitcher plugged with sponge
Eu Fellow you re taking the whole tragedy
Here take it and begone
Di I m going now
And yet! there s one thing more which if I get not
I m ruined Sweetest best Euripides
With this I ll go and never come again
Give me some withered leaves to fill my basket
Eu You ll slay me! Here! My plays are disappearing
Di Enough! I go Too troublesome by far
Am I not witting that the chieftains hate me!
Good Heavens! I m ruined I had clean forgotten
The thing whereon my whole success depends.
My own Euripides my best and sweetest
Perdition seize me if I ask aught else
Save this one thing this only only this
Give me some chervil borrowing from your mother
Eu The man insults us Shut the palace up
Here EURIPIDES *is wheeled in again and* DICAEOPOLIS *advances to the block to make his speech*
Di O Soul without our chervil we must go
Knowest thou the perilous strife thou hast to strive,
Speaking in favour of Laconian men?
On on my Soul! Here is the line How? What?
Swallow Euripides and yet not budge?
Oh good! Advance O long enduring heart
Go thither lay thine head upon the block
And say whatever to thyself seems good
Take courage! Forward! March! O well done heart!
Ch What will you say? What will you do? Man is it true
You are made up of iron and of shamelessness too?
You who will one against us all debate
Offering your neck a hostage to the State!
Nought does he fear
Since you will have it so speak we will hear
Di Bear me no grudge spectators if a beggar

I dare to speak before the Athenian people
About the city in a comic play
For what is true even comedy can tell.
And I shall utter startling things but true.
Nor now can Cleon slander me because
With strangers present, I defame the State
'Tis the Lenaea, and we're all alone
No strangers yet have come: nor from the states
Have yet arrived the tribute and allies.
We're quite alone clean winnowed for I count
Our alien residents the civic bran.
The Lacedaemonians I detest entirely
And may Poseidon, Lord of Taenarum,
Shake all their houses down about their ears
For I, like you, have had my vines cut down.
But after all—for none but friends are here—
Why the Laconians do we blame for this?
For men of ours, I do not say the State
Remember this, I do not say the State,
But worthless fellows of worthless stamp
Ill-coined, ill-minted, spurious little chaps,
Kept on denouncing Megara's little coats.
And if a cucumber or hare they saw
Or sucking pig or garlic, or lump-salt,
All were Megarian, and were sold off hand.
Still these were trifles, and our country's way
But some young tipsy cottabus-players went
And stole from Megara-town the fair Simaetha
Then the Megarians, garlicked with the smart,
Stole, in return, two of Aspasia's hussies.
From these three Wantons o'er the Hellenic race
Burst forth the first beginnings of the War
For then, in wrath, the Olympian Pericles
Thundered and lightened, and confounded Hellas,
Enacting laws which ran like drinking-songs,
"That the Megarians presently depart
From earth and sea, the mainland, and the mart."
Then the Megarians, slowly famishing
Besought their Spartan friends to get the Law
Of the three Wantons cancelled and withdrawn,
And oft they asked us, but we yielded not
Then followed instantly the clash of shields.
You'll say They should not but what should they then?
Come now had some Laconian, sailing out
Denounced and sold a small Seriphian dog
Would you have sat unmoved Far far from that!
You would have launched three hundred ships of war
And all the City had at once been full
Of shouting troops, of fuss with trierarchs,
Of paying wages, gilding Pallases,
Of rations measured, roaring colonnades,
Of wineskins, oarloops, bargaining for casks,
Of nets of onions, olives, garlic heads,
Of chaplets, pilchards, flute-girls, and black eyes.
And all the arsenal had rung with noise
Of oar spars planed, pegs hammered oarloops fitted,
Of boatswains calls, and flutes, and trills, and whistles.
This had ye done and shall not Telephus,
Think we do this? we've got no brains at all.

Semi Chorus I Aye, say you so, you rascally villain you?
And this from you, a beggar? Dare you blame us.
Because perchance we've got informers here?

Semi Chorus II. Aye, by Poseidon, every word he says
Is true and right he tells no lies at all.

S C. I True or untrue, is he the man to say it?
I'll pay him out though, for his insolent speech.

S C. II. Whither away? I pray you stay If him you hurt,
You'll find your own self hoisted up directly

A scuffle takes place in the orchestra in which the LEADER OF THE FIRST SEMICHORUS *is worsted*

S C. I. Lamachus! Help! with thy glances of lightning
Terrible-crested, appear in thy pride.
Come O Lamachus, tribesman and friend to us
Is there a stormer of cities beside?
Is there a captain? O come with haste
Help me O help! I am caught by the waist.

Enter LAMACHUS.

Lamachus Whence came the cry of battle to my ears?
Where shall I charge? where cast the battle-din?
Who roused the sleeping Gorgon from its case?

Di O Lamachus hero, O those crests and cohorts!

S C. I. O Lamachus, here has this fellow been
With frothy words abusing all the State.

La You dare, you beggar say such things as those

Di O Lamachus hero, grant me pardon true
If I, a beggar spake or chattered aught.

La What said you? Hey?

Di I can't remember yet.
I get so dizzy at the sight of arms.
I pray you lay that terrible shield aside.

La There then.

Di Now set it upside down before me.

La 'Tis done.

Di Now give me from your crest that plume.

La Here take the feather

Di Now then, hold my head,
And let me vomit. I so loath those crests.

La What! use my feather rogue, to make you vomit?

Di A feather is it, Lamachus? Pray what bird
Produced it? Is it a Great Boastard's plume?

La Death and Destruction!

Di No, no, Lamachus.
That's not for strength like yours. If strong you are
Why don't you circumcise me? You're well armed.

La What! you, a beggar beard the general so?

Di A beggar am I, Lamachus?

La What else?

Di An honest townsman, not an office seekman,
Since war began, an active-service-seekman,
But you're, since war began, a full pay-seekman.

La The people chose me—

Di. Aye, three cuckoo birds.
That's what I loathe; that's why I made my treaty;
When grey-haired veterans in the ranks I saw,
And boys like you, paltry malingering boys,
Off, some to Thrace—their daily pay three drachmas—
Phaenippuses, Hipparchidreprobatians,
And some with Chares, to Chaonia some,
Geretotheodores, Diomirogues, and some
To Camarina, Gela, and Grineela.
La. The people chose them—
Di. And how comes it, pray,
That you are always in receipt of pay,
And these are *never*? Come, Marilades,
You are old and grey; when have you served as envoy?
Never! Yet he's a steady active man.
Well then, Euphorides, Prinides, Dracyllus,
Have *you* Ecbatana or Chaonia seen?
Never! But Coesyra's son and Lamachus,
They have, to whom, for debts and calls unpaid,
Their friends but now, like people throwing out
Their slops at eve, were crying 'Stand away!'
La. O me! Democracy! can this be borne?
Di. No, not if Lamachus receive no pay.
La. But I with all the Peloponnesian folk
Will always fight, and vex them everyway,
By land, by sea, with all my might and main. *Exit.*
Di. And I to all the Peloponnesian folk,
Megarians and Boeotians, give full leave
To trade with me; but not to Lamachus. *Exit.*

Chorus.

The man has the best of the wordy debate, and the hearts of the people is winning
To his plea for the truce. Now doff we our robes, our own anapaestics beginning.

Since first to exhibit his plays he began, our chorus instructor has never
Come forth to confess in this public address how tactful he is and how clever.
But now that he knows he is slandered by foes before Athens so quick to assent,
Pretending he jeers our City and sneers at the people with evil intent,
He is ready and fain his cause to maintain before Athens so quick to repent.
Let honour and praise be the guerdon, he says, of the poet whose satire has stayed you
From believing the orators' novel conceits wherewith they cajoled and betrayed you;
Who bids you despise adulation and lies, nor be citizens Vacant and Vain.
For before, when an embassy came from the states intriguing your favour to gain,
And called you the town of the *violet crown*, so grand and exalted ye grew,
That at once on your tiptails erect ye would sit, those *crowns* were so pleasant to you.
And then, if they added the *shiny*, they got whatever they asked for their praises,
Though apter, I ween, for an oily sardine than for you and your City the phrase is.
By this he's a true benefactor to you, and by showing with humour dramatic
The way that our wise democratic allies are ruled by our State democratic.
And therefore their people will come oversea their tribute to bring to the City,
Consumed with desire to behold and admire the poet so fearless and witty,
Who dared in the presence of Athens to speak the thing that is rightful and true.
And truly the fame of his prowess, by this, has been bruited the universe through,
When the Sovereign of Persia, desiring to test what the end of our warfare will be,
Inquired of the Spartan ambassadors, first, which nation is queen of the sea,
And next, which the wonderful Poet has got as its stern and unsparing adviser;
For those who are lashed by his satire, he said, must surely be better and wiser,
And they'll in the war be the stronger by far, enjoying his counsel and skill.
And therefore the Spartans approach you to-day with proffers of Peace and Goodwill,
Just asking indeed that Aegina ye cede; and nought do they care for the isle,
But you of the Poet who serves you so well they fain would despoil and beguile.
But be *you* on your guard nor surrender the bard; for his Art shall be righteous and true.
Rare blessings and great will he work for the State, rare happiness shower upon you;
Not fawning, or bribing, or striving to cheat with an empty unprincipled jest;
Not seeking your favour to curry or nurse, but teaching the things that are best.

And therefore I say to the people to-day,
Let Cleon the worst of his villainies try,
His anger I fear not, his threats I defy!
For Honour and Right beside me will fight,
And never shall I
In ought that relates to the city be found
Such a craven as he, such a *profligate hound*.

O Muse, fiery-flashing, with temper of flame energetic, Acharnian, come to my gaze,
Like the wild spark that leaps from the evergreen oak,
when its red glowing charcoal is fanned to a blaze,
And the small fish are lying all in order for the frying;
And some are mixing Thasian, richly dight, shiny bright,
And some dip the small fish therein,
Come, fiery-flashing Maid, to thy fellow burgher's aid,
With exactly such a song, so glowing and so strong,

To our ld ru tic m lod es kin

W th eterans blame the City
I it meet and right that we,
Wh of old n manhoc d s v our
fou ht our battles on the sea
Should in a e be left unt nded
ea e posed to shame and ill?
I it r ght to let th ou gsters
a r their pe t fo ensic sk l,
Grappl ng us with writs and warrants,
holding up our age to scorn?
W wh now ha e lost o r music,
feeble nothings, dull forlorn
We whose only Safe Posedo
s th staff we lean upon
There we sta d decayed nd m ttering
hard beside the Court house Stone
Nou ht discerni g ll arou d us
sa e th darkness of our case
Comes the youngster wh has compassed
fo himself th accuse s place
S oots his r ght and nippin phrases,
t ckling us w th legal scraps,
Pulls us up and ross-exami es,
setting little erbal traps,
Rend and rattles ld T th nus
t ll the man is dazed and blind
Till w th toothless gums h mumbles,
then d part condemned nd fi ed
Sobb g we p g a h passes,
to his friends h murmurs low
All I e sa ed t bu a c fin
n w to pay the fine must go.

How can t be seemly a g e headed ma by the
wat r clock st eam t decov nd to slay
Wh of old ou and bold laboured ha d f r the
tate who wo ld w pe off his sweat and return
t the fray?
At M thon a ra ed to the battle hock we ran,
And ou mettle w displa ed foot to foot, man t
ma
d our name and ou fame hall t d e.
A outh we w re Pursuers on th Marathonian
plai
B ge Pursu ex us, and our best defence
ain
T this what can Marpsias reply?

Oh, Thuc d des t w t ess,
bowed with ge in sore d tress,
Feebl trugglng th lutches
of that Scythian wild ness
Fluent glib Cephisodemus—
Oh the sorrowful displa !
I m self was moved with pit
ea and w ped a tear awa
C ed thea the g lla t et
b a a cher ma led to ew
H m who, were b by Dem ter
that Thucydides we knew

Would have stood no airs or nonsense
from the Goddess Tra el sore [1]
Would have thrown the mighty wrestler
t n E th luses or more
Shouted down th ee thousand archers
with his accents of command
Shot his own accuser s kinsmen
in their Scythian fatherland
Na b t if ye will not lea e u
t our hardly earned repose
Sort the writs, d de tl e actions,
separating tl ese from those
Who assails the old and toothless
should be old and toothless too
For a younest r wa tons, gabblers,
Cle nias son[2] the trick may do.
So for future fines a d exiles,
fair nd square the balance h ld
Let the youngster sue the younest r
and the old man sue th old

Enter DICAEOPOLIS

D These are the boundaries of my market place
In thi res scene u hat u s the Pnyx somehow becom s the market place of DICAEOPOLIS
And here may all the P l ponnesian folk,
Megarians and Boeotians, freely trade
Selling to m but Lamachus may not,
And these three th n s, I Lep ous make I set
As market-cle ks, elected b the l t.
Within thes bounds may o former come,
O a y oth r sy co-Phasian man
But I ll go fetch the Treaty Pillar here,
And set t up n som conspicuous place
Exit DICAEOPOLIS, *a d a half starved* MEG RIAN *enters fo lou d by t o little girls u hom he bids mount th stage from the s de scenes*
Megaria Guid day Athanian market, Megara s l e!
B Frien'ly Zeus, I e miss t ye like my mither
But puir bairnies o a wa fu father
Speel up ye ll aibl ns fin a barl y bannock
N wh ten bairn tten wi yere—painch
Whilk wad ye liefer t be sellt or clemmed?
Girl I f r be sellt! Liefer be sellt!
Meg An sae say I m sel! But wha sae doited
As t g a ht for *you* a si ller kaith?
Aweel I ken a pawkie Megara trick,
I se busk ye up an say I m bring n pigg es.
Her slip these wee b t clooties on yer nieves,
An haw y resells a decent grumph s weans.
For gin I tak ye hame unsellt by Ha mes
Y ll thole th warst e tr mities o clemmin
N est pit thir lang pi -snowt es owre yer n bs,
An tech yere bodies in this sackie Sa
An min ye gruntan gra e n g r rawa
An mak the skirls o little Mystery Piggies.
Mysel will ca for Dicaeopolis.
Ha ! Dicaeopolis!

[1] Demeter
[2] Alcibiades.

Di Ave three cuckoo birds
That s what I loathe that s why I made my treaty
When grey haired veterans in the ranks I saw
And boys like you paltry malingering boys
Off some to Thrace—their daily pay three
drachmas—
Phaenippuses Hipparchidreprobatians
And some with Chares to Chaonia some
Ceretotheodores Diomirogues and some
To Camarina Gela and Grineela
La The people chose them—
Di And how comes it pray
That you are always in receipt of pay
And these are *never*? Come Marilades
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envoy?
Never! Yet he s a steady active man
Well then Euphorides Prinides Dracyllus
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They have to whom *for debts and calls unpaid*
Their friends but now like people throwing out
Their slops at eve were crying Stand away!
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Di No not if Lamachus receive no pay
La But I with all the Peloponnesian folk
Will always fight and vex them everyway
By land by sea with all my might and main
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That at once on your tiptails erect ye would sit
those *crowns* were so pleasant to you

And then if they added the *shiny* they got
whatever they asked for their praises
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Such a craven as he such a profligate hound

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energetic Acharnian come to my gaze
Like the wild spark that leaps from the evergreen
oak
when its red glowing charcoal is fanned to a blaze
And the small fish are lying all in order for the
frying
And some are mixing Thasian richly dight shiny
bright
And some dip the small fish therein
Come fiery flashing Maid to thy fellow burgher s
aid
With exactly such a song so glo ing and so strong

To eat wi saut yere bannock, an ye git ane
Exeunt DICAEOPOLIS *and* MEGARIAN

Chorus

A happy lot the man has got
his scheme devised with wondrous art
Proceeds and prospers as you see
and now he'll sit in his private Mart
The fruit of his bold design to reap
And O if a Ctesias come this way
Or other informers vex us, they
Will soon for their trespass weep

No sneak shall grieve you buying first
the fish you wanted to possess,
No Prepis on your dainty robes
wipe off his utter loathsomeness.
You'll no Cleonymus jostle there
But all unsoiled through the Mart you'll go,
And no Hyperbolus work you woe
With writs enough and to spare.

Never within these bounds shall walk
the little fop we all despise,
The young Cratinus neatly shorn
with single razor wanton wise,
That Artemon-engineer of ill,
Whose father stank from an old he goat,
And father and son, as you all may note,
Are rank with its fragrance still.

No Pauson, scurvy knave shall here
insult you in the market place,
Nor Lysistratus, to all
Cholargian folk a dire disgrace,
That deep-dyed sinner that low buffoon,
Who always shivers and hungers sore
Full thirty days, or it may be more,
In every course of the moon.

Enter BOEOTIAN, *with slave and musicians.*

Boeotian. Heth sirs, my shouthers sair wat
Heracles!
Ismen lad, pit doon that pennyroyal
Wi tentie care. Pipers wha cam fra Thaibes
Blaw *oop* the auld tyke's burdies wi the banes.
Di. Hang ou th t Off from my doors, you
wasps
Whence are these curst Chaeridian bumble drones
Hence, my door Get ye tae ta ens Hence
Exeunt musicians
Bo. An echt ye ar b Iolaus, stranger
Thae blawin be me thae wa fr Thaibes,
An da ed the blossom o' m penny royal.
B b please you, onie thing ye've got,
Some o' tha leckin or thae four ooted gear
Di. O welcome dear Boeotian m ffin-eater
What ha ou there?
Bo. A' that Boeoty gies us
Mats, dittany, pennyroyal, lantern-wicks,
An dooks, an kaes, an francolins, an coots,
P ery an divers.

Di. Eh? Why then, methinks,
You've brought foul weather to my market place
Bo. Ay, an I'm bringin maukins, geese an tods,
Easels an weasels, urchins, moles, an cats,
An otters too, an eels frae Loch Copais.
Di. O man, to men their daintiest morsel
bringing
Let me salute the eels, if eels you bring
Bo. Primest o Loch Copais fifty dochters
Come oot o that an mak the strangir welcome.
Di. O lo ed and lost, and longed for thou art
come,
A present grateful to the Comic choirs,
And dear to Morychus. Bring me out at once,
O kitchen knaves, the brasier and the fan.
Behold, my lads, this best of all the eels,
Six years truant, scarce returning now
O hild en welcome her to you I'll give
A charcoal fire for this sweet stranger's sake.
Out with her! Never may I lose again,
Not even in death, my darling dressed in—beet.
Bo. Whaur sall I git the siller for the feesh?
Di. This you shall give me as a market toll.
But tell me are these other things for sale?
Bo. Ay, ease they a tha goods.
Di. And at what price?
Or would you swap for something else?
Bo. I'se swap
For gear we haena, but y Attics hae.
Di. Well then, what say you to Phaleric sprats,
Or earthenware?
Bo. Sprats! ware! we e thae at hame.
G us some gear we lack, an ye ha e a rowth o
Di. I'll tell you what pack an s former up,
Like ware for exportation.
Bo. Mon! that's gud.
B the Twa Gudes,[1] an unco gain I se mak
Takin monkey fu o plaguy tricks.
Enter NICARCHUS.
Di. And here's Nicarchus coming to denounce
you!
Bo. He sma in bouk.
Di. But every inch is bad
Nicarchus. Whose is this merchandise?
Bo. 'Tis a mine here.
Frae Thaibes, wat Zeus, I bur t.
Ni. Then I here
Denounce t all as enemies!
Bo. Hout awa!
Do ye mak war an enmity wi the burdies?
Ni. Them and you too
Bo. What hae I dun ye wrang?
Ni. That will I say for the bystanders' sake.
A lantern wick you are bringing from the foe
Di. Show him up would you, for a lantern wick?
Ni. Ay, for that lantern-wick will fire the docks.
Di. A lantern wick the docks! O dear and how?
Ni. If Boeotian stuck it in a beetle
And sent it, lighted, down a water-course
Straight to the docks, watching when Boreas blew

[1]The two gods of Boeotian are Zethus and Amphion.

Are ye for buyin onie pigs the day?
Enter DICAEOPOLIS
Di How now Megarian?
Meg Come to niffer guidman
Di How fare ye all?
Meg A greetin by the fire
Di And very jolly too if there s a piper
What do your people do besides?
Meg Sae sae
For when I cam frae Megara toun the morn
Our Lairds o Council were in gran debate
How we might quickliest perish but an ben
Di So ye ll lose all your troubles
Meg What for no?
Di What else at Megara? What s the price of wheat?
Meg Och! high eneugh high as the Gudes an higher
Di Got any salt?
Meg Ye re maisters o our saut
Di Or garlic?
Meg Garlic quotha! when ye resells
Makin yere raids like onie swarm o mice
Howkit up a the rooties wi a stak
Di What *have* you got then?
Meg Mystery piggies I
Di That s good let s see them
Meg Hae! They re bonnie piggies
Lift it an t please you tis sae sleek an bonnie
Di What on earth s this?
Meg A piggie that by Zeus
Di A pig! What sort of pig?
Meg A Megara piggie
What! no a piggie that?
Di It doesn t seem so
Meg Tis awfu! Och the disbelievin carle!
Uphaudin she s na piggie! Will ye wad
My cantie frien a pinch o thymy saut
She s no a piggie in the Hellanian use?
Di A human being s—
Meg Weel by Diocles
She s mine wha s piggie did ye think she was?
Mon? wad ye hear them skirlin ?
Di By the Powers
I would indeed
Meg Now piggies skirl awa
Ye winna? winna skirl ye graceless hizzies?
By Hairmes then I se tak ye hame again
Girls Weel weel weel
Meg This no a piggie?
Di Faith it seems so now
But twont remain so for five years I m thinking
Meg Trowth tak my word for t she ll be like her mither
Di But she s no good for offerings
Meg What for no?
What for nae guid for offerins?
Di She s no tail
Meg Aweel the puir wee thing she s o ve young yet
But when she s auld she ll have a gawcie tail
But wad ye rear them here s a bonnie piggie!
Di Why she s the staring image of the other
Meg They re o ane father an ane mither baith
But bide a wee an when she s fat an curlie
She ll be an offerin gran for Aphrodite
Di A pig s no sacrifice for Aphrodite
Meg What no for Her! Mon for hirsel the lane
Why there s nae flesh sae tastie as the flesh
O thae sma piggies roastit on a spit
Di But can they feed without their mother yet?
Meg Poteidan yes! withouten father too
Di What will they eat most freely?
Meg Aught ye gie them
But spier yoursel
Di Hey piggy piggy!
1st Girl Weel
Di Do you like pease you piggy?
1st Girl Wee wee weel
Di What and Phibalean figs as well?
1st Girl Wee weel
Di What and you other piggy?
2nd Girl Wee wee weel
Di Eh but ye re squealing bravely for the fi s
Bring out some figs here one of you within
For these small piggies Will they eat them? Yah!
Worshipful Heracles! how they are gobbling now
Whence come the pigs? They seem to me Aetalian
Meg Na na they haena eaten a thae figs
See here here s ane I pickit up mysel
Di Upon my word they are jolly little beasts.
What shall I give you for the pair? let s hear
Meg Gie me for ane a tie o garlic will ye
An for the tither half a peck o saut
Di I ll buy them stay you here awhile *Exit*
Meg Aye aye
Traffickin Hairmes wad that I could swap
Baith wife an mither on sic terms as thae
Enter INFORMER
Informer Man! who are *you*?
Meg Ane Megara piggie seller
In Then I ll denounce your goods and you yourself
As enemies!
Meg Hech here it comes again
The vera primal source of a our wae
In You ll Megarize to your cost Let go the sack
Meg Dicaeopolis! Dicaeopolis! Here s a chiel
Denouncin me
Di (*re entering*) Where is he? Market clerks
Why don t you keep these sycophants away?
What! show him up without a lantern wick?
In Not show our enemies up?
Di You had better not
Get out and do your showing other where
Exit INFORMER
Meg The pest thae birkies are in Athans toun!
Di Well never mind Megarian take the things
Garlic and salt for which you sold the pigs
Fare well!
Meg That s na our way in Megara toun
Di Then on my head the officious wish return!
Meg O piggies try withouten father now

Enter CRI R *while the eccyclema expo es to view the interior of* D C EOPO IS s *house*

C O yes! O yes!
Com drain your pitchers to the trumpet s sound
In our old fa hion Whoso drains *hi* fi st
Shall ha e fo p ize a skin of—Ctesiph n

Di Lad ! Lasses! heard ye not the wo ds he sa d?
What are ye t? Do ye n t hear the Crier?
Quick! tew and roast and turn the roasti g flesh
L spit the haremeat weave the co onals
Bri g the spits her and I ll impale the thrushes.

Ch. I en y m ch your happy plan
I en y more you lucky man
The joy u re now possess g

D What hen a u d the spits you see
the thru hes roast n gloriously?

Ch And that s a saying I adm e

Di B v poke n e up the harcoal fire

Ch Oh te w th what cookly art
And gr o a e so t m and sma t
His n r pa t i e s dress ng

Enter DE ETES *an Athenia farmer*

Farmer Alas! Alas!

D O Heracles ho s there?

Fa An ill-starred man

Di Then keep it t yourself.

Fa O—f r you nly hold the tr ces, dear—
Measure me ut th gh b t fi e yea s f Peace.

D What ail y u?

F R ined! Lost my oxen twain

D Whe f m?

F F m Phyle The Boeotians stole th m.

D And y t o a clad in white you ll tarred loon!

F They twa ma ntained me n the ery lap
Of ffl e t muckery

D Well what want you now?

Fa Lost m two eyes, weepi g my oxen twa n
Come, f you ca for De tes of Phyl
R b some Pea -oi tm nt d on my two yes

D Wh bles the fool I m n t p blic u geon

F D ow I ll ma be find my t n twa n

Di go nd weep t P tt lus doo

Fa Do ju t on si gled op J st d op me her
I t this qu ll little drop f Peace

D No, n t tw tterlet t k your tea s else wher

F Ala ! Ala ! m d li g v k f en *Exit*

Ch H lo es th Treat pleasant t t
He will n t be m th nks n h te
To l t n th h t

Di Pour n th tripe the honey yo !
A d to th c t le richly stew!

Ch H trumpet lik h d s so d

D B su e the b t of eel e browned

Ch Th d ou peak ou sa ou y es,
A p harpe n so ou f per tes
That e ha dly bear t

D Now roa t these the th s and b own th m !

Enter ROOM M N

Groomsman O Dicaeopol s!

Di Who s th re? who s there?

Gr A bridegroom sends you from his wedd ng banquet
These b t of meat

Di Well done whoe er he is

G And in retu n he b ds you pour him out
To k ep him safely with his bride at home
Into th s o ntment pot one dram of Peace

Di T ke take y ur meat away I can t ab de it
Not for ten thousa d drachmas would I g ve him
One dr p of Peace (*Enter* BRIDESMAID) Hey who comes he e?

Gr The bridesmaid
Bring g a private message from the bride

D Well what have *you* to say? What wants the bride?
(*Affect to listen*)
O hea en the laughable request she makes
To keep her b degroom saf ly by her s de.
I ll do t bring the tr ces he s a woman
Unfit to bear the burdens of the war
Now hold th my th box unde neath my girl
K w y u the way to use it? Tell the bride
When th y re en ll ng sold ers for the war
To rub the bridegroom erv n ght with th

Exeunt GROO SMAN *and* BRIDE MAID

Now t ke the tru es back a d bri g the ladle
I ll fill the w necups for the P tcher feast

Ch But h re runs o e with yeb ows puckered up
Methinks he comes a messe ger of woe

Enter CRIER

Cr O toils, and fights, and fi ht n Lamachuses!

La (*u thin*) Who clangs around my bronze accoutred halls? *E ter* LAM CHUS.

Cr The g neral b d you t ke yo r crests and cohort
And hu ry ff this in t nt to keep watch
Amo g t the m u tain passes the snow
Fo news has me that at this P tcher feast
Boeot an band t mean to ra d our l nd

La O g n als great in n mbers small n worth!
Shame that I may not e en nj y th feast

Di O e ped t n battl Lamachaean!

La O dear what *you*! Do yo insult me too?

Di What w uld y u fi ht w th Ge yon the four wi ged?

La O woe!
O what messa e ha, this Cr er br ught me!

Di Oho! what messag will this ru ner b g me?

Enter MESSE R

M enger D caeopolis!

D Well?

Mes Come at on to supper
And bri your p tcher and your pper-chest
The priest of B chu se d to fetch you th th
A d do be q ck you keep the supper w ti g
F all th s else e read a d pr pa ed
The e h s, tables, sofa-cushion gs,
Wreaths, sw tmeat myrrh the harl t y are ther
Whole meal cakes chees cakes, sesame honey cakes,

His stiffest breeze then if the ships caught fire
They d blaze up in an instant

Di Blaze you rascal!
What with a beetle and a lantern wick?

Ni Bear witness!

Di Stop his mouth and bring me litter
I ll pack him up like earthenware for carriage
So they mayn t crack him on their journey home

Ch Tie up O best of men with care
The honest stranger s piece of ware
For fear they break it
As homeward on their backs they take it

Di To that be sure I ll have regard
Indeed it creaks as though twere charred
By cracks molested
And altogether God detested

Ch How shall he deal with it?

Di For every use tis fit
A cup of ills a lawsuit can
For audits an informing pan
A poisoned chalice
Full filled with every kind of malice

Ch But who can safely use I pray
A thing like this from day to day
In household matters
A thing that always creaks and clatters?

Di He s strong my worthy friend and tough
He will not break for usage rough
Not though you shove him
Head foremost down his heels above him

Ch (*to* BOEOTIAN) You ve got a lovely pack

Bo A bonnie hairst I se mak

Ch Aye best of friends your harvest make
And whereso er it please you take
This artful knowing
And best equipped informer going

Di Twas a tough business but I ve packed the scamp
Lift up and take your piece of ware Boeotian

Bo Gae pit your shouther underneath Ismeny

Di And pray be careful as you take him home
You ve got a rotten bale of goods but still!
And if you make a harvest out of *him*
You ll be in luck s way as regards informers

Exeunt DICAEOPOLIS BOEOTIAN *and his slave*

Enter SERVANT OF LAMACHUS

Servant Dicaeopolis!

Di Well? why are you shouting?

Se Why?
Lamachus bids you towards the Pitcher feast
Give him some thrushes for this drachma here
And for three drachmas one Copaic eel

Enter DICAEOPOLIS

Di Who is this Lamachus that wants the eel?

Se The dread the tough the terrible who wields
The Gorgon targe and shakes three shadowy plumes

Di An eel for *him*? Not though his targe he gave me!
Let him go shake his plumes at his salt fish
If he demur I ll call the Market clerks
Now for myself I ll carry all these things
Indoors to the tune *o merles an mavises wings* Exit

Chorus

Have ye seen him all ye people
seen the man of matchless art
Seen him by his private treaty
traffic gain from every mart
Goods from every neighbour
Some required for household uses
some twere pleasant warm to eat
All the wealth of all the cities
lavished here before his feet
Free from toil and labour

War I ll never welcome in
to share my hospitality
Never shall the fellow sing
Harmodius in my company
Always in his cups he acts
so rudely and offensively
Tipsily he burst upon
our happy quiet family
Breaking this upsetting that
and brawling most pugnaciously
Yea when we entreated him
with hospitable courtesy
Sit you down and drink a cup
a Cup of Love and Harmony
All the more he burnt the poles
we wanted for our husbandry
Aye and spilt perforce the liquor
treasured up within our vines
Proudly he prepares to banquet
Did ye mark him all elate
As a sample of his living
cast these plumes before his gate?
Grand his ostentation!
O of Cypris foster sister
and of every heavenly Grace
Never knew I till this moment
all the glory of thy face
Reconciliation!

O that Love would you and me
unite in endless harmony
Love as he is pictured with
the wreath of roses smilingly
Maybe you regard me as
a fragment of antiquity
Ah but if I get you dear
I ll show my triple husbandry
First a row of vinelets will I
plant prolonged and orderly
Next the little fig tree shoots
beside them growing lustily
Thirdly the domestic vine
although I am so elderly
Round them all shall olives grow
to form a pleasant boundary
Thence will you and I anoint us,
darling when the New Moon shines.

Then the Great Boasta d s plume be cast away
Prone on the rocks, a dol rous cry he raised
"O glorious Eye with this my la t fon I look
The hea enly b ht I lea e my day is d ne"
H spak nd strai htway f lls nto a ditch
J mps up ga confronts the runawa s,
And prod the fleein bandits w th his spear
B t here he enters. Open w de the door

Re-enter LAMACHUS wo nded s pported by at tendar s d DI A OPOLIS jovial bet een two court s

La O lack a-day! O la k -da !
I'm hacked I m k lled by host l lances!
B t orse tha wou d o la ce twill grie e me
If Dicaeopo s per ei e me
And mock, and mock at my mis ha ces.

Di O lu ky day! O l ck day!
What mort l e r can be ri h er
Tha h ho feels, my gold n misses,
You sof est closest lo l est k sses.
T as I, twa I first drained the pitcher

La O m my wofulд lo ous lot!
O me, the gruesome wounds I got!

D My da ling Lamachippus, s it ot?

La O d l ful ha c !

D O cursed spite!

La Wh g e me a kiss?

Di Why gi e me a bite?

La O me the hea y hea y charge th y tried

Di Who makes a charge this happy Pitcher tid ?

La O P ean Healer! heal me Paea pray

Di 'Tis not the Healer s festi al to-day

La O l ft me gently round the hips,
My comrades true!

D O kiss me warmly on the lips,
My da l ngs, do!

La My brain is dizzy w th the blow
Of host le stone

Di Mine s dizzy too to bed I ll go,
And not al ne

La O take m in y ur healin ha ds, and bring
To P ttalus this battered frame of mine

Di O take m to the jud es. Wh re s the K ng
That rules the fea t? han I me my skin of wine

La A la e has struck me through the bone
So piteously! so piteou ly!

He is helped off the stage

Di I e drained the pitcher ll alo e
S g ho! S ng ho! for Victory

Ch S ng ho! S ng ho! for Victo y then,
If so ou b d f so you bid

Di I filled it w th neat w ne my men
A d quaffed t at a gulp I d d

Ch S ng ho! b ve heart the w neskin take,
And onward go, and onward go.

Di And ye mu t follow in my wak
And sing for Victory ho! sing ho!

Ch O yes, we ll follow for your sake
Your w neskin and yourself, I trow
Sing ho! for Victory won, sing ho!

And dancing girls Harmodius dearest ones
So pray make haste

La O wretched wretched me!

Di Aye the great Gorgon twas you chose for patron

Now close the house and pack the supper up

La Boy bring me out my soldier s knapsack here

Di Boy bring me out my supper basket here

La Boy bring me onions with some thymy salt

Di For me fish fillets onions I detest

La Boy bring me here a leaf of rotten fish

Di A tit bit leaf for me I ll toast it there

La Now bring me here my helmet s double plume

Di And bring me here my thrushes and ring doves

La How nice and white this *ostrich plume* to view

Di How nice and brown this pigeon s flesh to eat

La Man don t keep jeering at my armour so

Di Man don t keep peering at my thrushes so

La Bring me the casket with the three crests in it

Di *Bring me the basket with the hare s flesh in it*

La Surely the moths my crest have eaten up

Di Sure this hare soup I ll eat before I sup

La Fellow I ll thank you not to talk to *me*

Di Nay but the boy and I we can t agree
Come will you bet and Lamachus decide
Locusts or thrushes which the daintier are?

La *Insolent knave!*

Di (*to the boy*) Locusts he says by far

La Boy boy take down the spear and bring it here

Di Boy take the sweetbread off and bring it here

La Hold firmly to the spear whilst I pull off
The case

Di And you hold firmly to the spit

La Boy bring the framework to support my shield

Di Boy bring the bakemeats to support my frame

La Bring here the grim backed circle of the shield

Di And here the cheese backed circle of the cake

La Is not this—mockery plain for men to see?

Di Is not this—cheese cake sweet for men to eat?

La Pour on the oil boy Gazing on my shield
I see an old man tried for cowardliness

Di Pour on the honey Gazing on my cake
I see an old man mocking Lamachus

La Bring me a casque to arm the outer man

Di Bring me a cask to warm the inner man

La With this I ll arm myself against the foe

Di With this I ll warm myself against the feast

La Boy lash the blankets up against the shield

Di Boy lash the supper up against the chest

La Myself will bear my knapsack *for myself.*

Di Myself will wear my wraps and haste away

La Take up the shield my boy and bring it on
Snowing! good lack a wintry prospect mine

Di Take up the chest a suppery prospect mine

Exeunt DICAEOPOLIS *and* LAMACHUS

Ch Off to your duties my heroes bold
Different truly the paths ye tread
One to drink with wreaths on his head
One to watch and shiver with cold
Lonely the while his antagonist passes
The sweetest of hours with the sweetest of lasses

Pray we that Zeus calmly reduce
to destruction emphatic and utter
That meanest of poets and meanest of men
Antimachus offspring of Sputter
The Choregus who sent me away
without any supper at all
At the feast of Lenaea I pray
two Woes that Choregus befall
May he hanker for a dish
of the subtle cuttle fish
May he see the cuttle sailing
through its brine and through its oil
On its little table lying
hot and hissing from the frying
Till it anchor close beside him
when alas! and woe betide him!
As he reaches forth his hand
for the meal the Gods provide him
May a dog snatch and carry off the spoil off the spoil
May a dog snatch and carry off the spoil

Duly the first Woe is rehearsed
attend whilst the other I m telling
It is night and our gentleman after a ride
is returning on foot to his dwelling
With ague he s sorely bested
and he s feeling uncommonly ill
When suddenly down on his head
comes Orestes s club with a will
Tis Orestes hero mad
tis the drunkard and the pad
Then stooping in the darkness
let him grope about the place
If his hand can find a brickbat
at Orestes to be flung
But instead of any brickbat
may he grasp a podge of dung
And rushing on with this Orestes may he miss
And hit young Cratinus in the face in the face
And hit young Cratinus in the face

Enter ATTENDANT

Attendant Varlets who dwell in Lamachus s halls
Heat water knaves heat water in a pot
Make ready lint and salves and greasy wool
And ankle bandages Your lord is hurt
Pierced by a stake whilst leaping o er a trench
Then twisting round he wrenched his ankle out
And falling cracked his skull upon a stone
And shocked the sleeping Gorgon from his shield

W e sure to catch it thrice as bad from master
Now let s excogitate at once good fellow
Which way to turn our footsteps, and t whom
N Th re s nothin„ better than m sert good
f llow
De But nought we do is hid from Paphlagon.
His eyes are everywhere he traddles out,
One foot in Pylus, in the Assembl one
So vast his stride that at the self sam moment
H seat r in Chaonia and his hands
Are set on Begetn nd his mind on Theft
N Well then, we had better d e but just con
sider
How we can d e the manliest sort of death
De The manliest sort of death? Let s see which
is t?
N Had we ot better drink the blood of bull ?
Twere fine t di Themistocles death
De Blood? o pure wine to the toa t of Happy
Fortu e!
From that we ll ma be g t some happ thought
N Pure wine indeed! Is thi t ppl matter?
How can one g t when dru k a happ thou ht?
De A e say you so, you water fountain tw ddler?
And dare you rail at wine s i enti ness?
I tell you nothing has such go as wine
Wh look you now t hen men drink they
thri e,
Grow wealth speed th r bus ess, win their suits,
Mak themsel es happy benefit their friends.
Go, fetch me out a stoup of wine, and l t me
Moi en m wits, and utter something bright
N O me what good will all your t ppling do?
De Much bring it out I ll lay me down awhile
For wh n I m drunk, I ll erything bespatter
W th little scraps f schemes, and plots, nd pla s.
NICI enters the house nd returns with a bottle
N I g t the win nobody saw m tak it
Was n t that luck?
De What s Paphlagon bout?
N Drunk! Snor g on his ba k amidst his hides,
The j ler gorged with confiscation pa t es.
De Come tinkle out a b mper f pu wine
To pour
N Here, tak and pour to Happy Fortune.
Quaff quaff the lo -cup f Pramnian Fortune
De O H ppy Fort ne, th e s th thou ht not
m n!
N Pra ou what is it?
De Steal from Paphlagon
Wh t he sleeps, those oracles of his,
And bring them out
N I will and et I m fearful
That I ma meet w th most u happy Fortun
Enters house
De Come now I ll draw th pit h r myself,
Moisten m w ts, nd utt som thing bright.
N (returning) P phlagon snoring so! H never
saw me
I got th sacred oracle which h keeps
So sn gl
De O you clever fellow you,
I'll read it hand t o er you the while
F'll me the cup Let s see what have we here?
O! Prophecies! Give me the cup directly
N Here! What do they say?
De Fill me another cup
N Fill me another? Is that really there?
De O Bakis!
N Well?
De C e me the cup directly
N Bakis seems m hty partial to the cup
De O v llainous Paphlagon this it was you fea ed
This oracle bout yourself!
N What is it?
D Herein is written how himself shall perish
N How hall he?
De How? The oracle says stra ght out,
That first of all there comes an oakum-seller
Who first shall manage all the State s affairs.
N One something seller well, what follows,
pray?
De Next after him there comes a sheep-seller
N Two something sellers what s this seller s
fortune?
D He'll hold the reins, till some more villainous
rogue
Arise than he and thereupon he ll perish.
Then follows Paphlagon our leath r seller
Thief, brawler roaring as Cycl borus roars.
N The leather-seller then shall o erthrow
Th sheep-seller?
De He shall.
N O wretched me,
Is there o other somethin seller left?
De There is yet o e a wondrous trade he has.
N What I beseech you?
De Shall I tell you?
N Aye
De A sausage seller ousts the leather-seller
N A sausage sell r! Goodness, what a trade!
Where er shall we find on ?
De That s the question.
N Why here comes one tis pro idential surely
Bound for the agora
De Hi com hither! here!
You dearest man you blessed sausa seller!
Arise a Sa our to th State and us.
Enter S USAGE SELLER
Sausage Seller Eh! What are you shoutin„ at?
De Come h r this instant
And hear your wonderful amazin luck.
N Make him put down h s d esser tell him all
Th n ws about that ra l we got
I ll keep n eye on Paphlagon the while
Exit NICI s
D Come put you down those cookery im l
ments.
Th n make your reve e n e to the Gods and earth—
S-S The l what s the row
De O ha py man nd rich
N thin to-day to-m we erything!
O mighty ruler of Imperial Athen !
S S Good fellow let me wash the guts, and sell

THE KNIGHTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Demosthenes	Paphlagon
Nicias	Demus
Sausage Seller	Chorus of Knights

In the foreground is a loose arrangement of stones which will later on be taken to represent the Pnyx Behind are three houses the central one with a harvest wreath over the door is the abode of DEMUS *whilst the others serve for* PAPHLAGON *who is* CLEON *and the* SAUSAGE SELLER *Out of the house of* DEMUS *run two slaves howling their masks represent the two famous Athenian generals* NICIAS *and* DEMOSTHENES

Demosthenes O! O! This Paphlagon with all his wiles
This newly purchased pest I wish the Gods
Would utterly abolish and destroy !
For since he entered by ill luck our house
He s always getting all the household flogged
Nicias I wish they would this chief of Paphlagons
Him and his lies!
De Ha! how feel *you* poor fellow?
Ni Bad like yourself
De Then come and let us wail
A stave of old Olympus both together
Both (*sobbing*) Mumu! Mumu! Mumu! Mumu! Mumu!
De Pah! What s the good of whimpering? Better far
To dry our tears and seek some way of safety
Ni Which way? You tell me
De Rather tell me you
Or else we ll fight
Ni By Apollo no not I
You say it first and then I ll say it after
De O that thou said st the thing that I would say
Ni I ve not the pluck I wish I could suggest
Some plan in smart Euripidean style
De Don t do it! Don t! Pray don t be chervil me
But find some caper cutting trick from master
Ni Will you say sert like that speaking it crisply?
De Of course I ll say it sert
Ni Now after sert
Say de
De De
Ni Yes that s very nicely said
Now first say sert, and then say de, beginning
Slowly at first but quickening as you go
De Aye sert de sert-de sert de sert
Ni There tis!
Do you not like it?
De Like it yes but—
Ni What?
De There s an uncanny sound about desert
Ni Uncanny? How?
De They flog deserters so
Ni O then twere better that we both should go
And fall before the statues of the Gods
De Stat at ues is it? What do you really think
That there are Gods?
Ni I know it
D Know it! How?
Ni I m such a wretched God-detested chap
De Well urged indeed but seek some other way
Would you I told the story to the audience?
Ni Not a bad plan but let us ask them first
To show us plainly by their looks and cheer
If they take pleasure in our words and acts
De I ll tell them now We two have got a master
Demus of Pnyx borough such a sour old man
Quick tempered country minded bean consuming
A trifle hard of hearing Last new moon
He bought a slave a tanner Paphlagon
The greatest rogue and liar in the world
This tanning Paphlagon he soon finds out
Master s weak points and cringing down before him
Flatters and fawns and wheedles and cajoles
With little apish leather snippings thus
O Demus try one case get the three-obol
Then take your bath gorge guzzle eat your fill
Would you I set your supper? Then he ll seize
A dish some other servant has prepared
And serve it up for master and quite lately
I d baked a rich Laconian cake at Pylus
When in runs Paphlagon and bags my cake
And serves it up to Demus as his own
But us he drives away and none but he
Must wait on master there he stands through dinner
With leathern flap and flicks away the speakers
And he chants oracles till the dazed old man
Goes Sibyl mad then when he sees him mooning
He plies his trade He slanders those within
With downright lies so then we re flogged poor wretches
And Paphlagon runs round extorting begging
Upsetting everyone and Mark says he
There s Hylas flogged that s all my doing better
Make friends with me or *you* ll be trounced to-day "
So then we bribe him off or if we don t

For he proved himself a rascal
many many times a day
Therefore smite him, chase him, pound him,
rend and rattl and confound him!
Show your loathin show as we d
press with angry shouts around him.
Tak you heed, or h 'll evad you
watch him closely for th man
Knows how Encra es escaped us,
fleein to his stores of bran.
Pa. O my Holastic veterans,
of th great Triobol clan,
Whom I now h ight and wron I nourish,
bawlin shoutin all I can
Help me by contriving tra ors
shamefully abused and beaten.
Ch. Rightly for th public commons
you before your turn have eaten,
And you squeeze the udit passers,
pinchin them like figs, to try
Which is ripe, and which is ripenin
which is very crude and dry
Find you one of easy temper
mouth gape, and vacant look,
Back from Chersonese you bring him,
grasp him firml fix your hook,
Twist his shoulder ba k and g bl
gulp th tim down at once.
And you search amongst th townsmen
for some lamblkin witted dunce
Wealth ... of ... k ... malice
shudders ... t d... utes and f ... ss.
Pa. ... assail me too, m masters?
'tis for you th beat me thus
'Tis because I thou ht of movin
that twer proper here to make
Some memorial of your worships
for your nobl alour s sake
Ch. Hea, him tryin to cajole u
O h sup bendi sneak,
Playin off his tr k pon us,
on dotards old and weak.
N but there m arm shall smit him
f to pass on ther he seek
Li k do th direction,
here vain t m lee he butts.
Pa. Athens Dem see the monsters,
see them punch me in the gu s.
Ch. S outh are ou you w boal ays
by you shouts subvert the t wn.
S. S. B t in this I'll first surpass him
thus I shout the fellow down.
Ch. If in baw vou d fea him,
s g w bo! for Victory s sake.
L in shamelessness you beat him,
t en ndeed we take the cake.
Pa. I c nounc th sm g fellow
contr band of war he takes
For he Pe...pon esia g...ers
trap ... them w h girdle-cakes.
S.-S. I denounce th ... f low
at the Hall, from ... to da
In he runs with empty belly
with a full one hies away
Ch. Fish, and flesh, and bread exporting
and a hundred things like these
Contraband of peace, which never
were allowed to Pericles.
Pa Death awaits you at once you two.
S. S. Thrice as loud can I squall as you.
Pa N w will I bawl you down by bawlin
S.-S. Now will I squall you down by squalli
Pa. Lead our armies, and I'll ha khste you.
S. S I ll with dog whips sash you and smite you.
Pa I ll outw t you by fraud nd l ...
S.-S. I ll your pett toes chop for fryin
Pa Now unbluskin regard me, you.
S.-S. I was bred in the agora too.
P Say but g r r and to strips I'll tear you.
S. S Speak on word, and as dun I'll bear you.
P... I confess that I steal Do you?
S.-S. Agora Hermes! yes, I do.
If I m seen I m perjurer too.
Pa. Som bod else s tricks you re vaunting?
Now to the Pryta es off I'll run
T ll them you e got some hol pig guts.
Tell them you e paid no t the thereon.
Ch. O ... O shameless of heart
O Bawler and Brawler self seeking
The land the Assembly th Tolls,
are all with thi e impudence reekin
And the Courts, nd th actions at law
they are full unto loathin and ha el
Thou stirrest the mud to its depths,
perturbin the whol of th State.
Ruffian, who hast deafened Athens
with thin e erlasting din
Watching from the rocks the tribute
tunn fashion, shoaling in
P Well I know the very quarter
where the cobbled up the plot
S.-S. You re a known hand at cobblin
lse in mincing meat I m n t
You who cheated ll the rust cs
w th a flabby bullock hide
Cuttin t aslant t make it
look lik leather firm nd dried
I a day the shoes you sold them
wobbled half a foot too wid
N That s th very trick the rascal
played th other day on me
And my friend and fellow bur hers
lau hed with undissembled g ee
I was swimmi g in m slippers
r I got to Pergasa
Ch. So then thou hast e en from th first
that shameless bra ado displa ed
Which alon th Orators Patron.
And foremost of al b ts and
Thou the wealthy strangers milkest
drainin off thei rich supplies
And the son of H ppodamus
watches thee with streamin eyes
Ah, but another has dawned on us now

My sausages What need to flout me so?
De You fool! the guts indeed! Now look you here
You see those people on the tiers?
S S I do
De You shall be over lord of all those people
The Agora and the Harbours and the Pnyx
You ll trim the Generals trample down the Council
Fetter imprison make the Hall your brothel
S S What I?
De Yes you yourself! And that s not all
For mount you up upon the dresser here
And view the islands all around
S S I see
De And all the marts and merchant ships?
S S I see
De And aren t you then a lucky man?
And *that s* not all Just cast your eyes askew
The right to Caria and the left to Carthage
S S A marvellous lucky man to twist my neck!
De Nay but all these shall be your—perquisites
You shall become this oracle declares
A Man most mighty!
S S Humbug! How can I
A sausage selling chap become a Man?
De Why that s the very thing will make you great
Your roguery impudence and agora training
S S I am not worthy of great power methinks
De O me not worthy! what s the matter now?
You ve got I fear some good upon your conscience
Spring you from gentlemen?
S S By the powers not I
From downright blackguards
De Lucky lucky man
O what a start you ve got for public life
S S But I know nothing friend beyond my letters
And even of them but little and that badly
De The mischief is that you know *anything*
To be a Demus leader is not now
For lettered men nor yet for honest men
But for the base and ignorant Don t let slip
The bright occasion which the Gods provide you
S S How goes the oracle?
De Full of promise good
Wrapped up in cunning enigmatic words
Nay but if once the Eagle the black tanned mandible curver
Seize with his beak the Serpent the dullard the drinker of life blood
Then shall the sharp sour brine of the Paphlagon tribe be extinguished
Then to the entrail sellers shall God great glory and honour
Render unless they elect to continue the sale of the sausage
S S But what in the world has this to do with me?
De The black tanned Eagle that means Paphlagon
S S And what the mandibles?
De That s self evident
His fingers crooked to carry off their prey
S S What does the Serpent mean?
De That s plainer still
A serpent s long a sausage too is long
Serpents drink blood and sausages drink blood
The Serpent then it says shall overcome
The black tanned Eagle if it s not talked over
S S I like the lines but how can I I wonder
Contrive to manage Demus affairs
De Why nothing s easier Do what now you do
Mince hash and mash up everything together
Win over Demus with the savoury sauce
Of little cookery phrases You ve already
Whatever else a Demagogue requires
A brutal voice low birth an agora training
Why you ve got all one wants for public life
The Pythian shrine and oracles concur
Crown crown your head pour wine to mighty—Dulness
Prepare to fight the man
S S But what ally
Will stand beside me for the wealthy men
Tremble before him and the poor folk blench
De A thousand Knights all honest men and true
Detest the scoundrel and will help the cause
And whosoe er is noblest in the State
And whosoe er is brightest in the tiers
And I myself And God will lend his aid
And fear him not he is not pictured really
For all the mask providers feared to mould
His actual likeness but our audience here
Are shrewd and bright they ll recognize the man
Enter NICIAS
Ni Mercy upon us! here comes Paphlagon
Enter PAPHLAGON
Paphlagon By the Twelve Gods you two shall pay for this
Always conspiring plotting ill to Demus!
What s this Chalcidian goblet doing here?
Hah! ye re inciting Chalcis to revolt
Villains and traitors! ye shall die the death
De (*to* SAUSAGE SELLER) Hi! where are you off to? Stop! For goodness sake
Don t fail us now most doughty Sausage seller!
The CHORUS OF KNIGHTS *enter the orchestra*
Hasten up my gallant horsemen
now s the time your foe to fight
Now then Simon now Panaetius
charge with fury on the right
Here they re coming! Worthy fellow
wheel about commence the fray
Lo the dust of many horsemen
rushing on in close array!
Turn upon him fight him smite him
scout him rout him every way
Chorus Smite the rascal smite him smite him
troubler of our Knightly train
Foul extortioner Charybdis
bottomless abyss of gain
Smite the rascal smite the rascal
many times the word I ll say

For he proved himself a rascal
many many times a day
Therefore smite him chase him po nd him
rend and rattle and confound him!
Show your loathing show as we do
press with angry shouts around him
Take you heed or he ll e ade ou
watch h m closely for the man
Knows how Eucrates escaped us,
fleeing to his stores of bran

Pa O my Heliastic eterans,
of th great Triobol cla
Whom through right a d wrong I nourish
bawl shouting all I can
Help me by conspiring traitors
sham fully abused and beaten

Ch Rightly f r the publ c commons
you before your turn have eaten
And you squeeze the audit passers,
pinching them like figs, to try
Which is ripe, and which is ripening
which is v ry crude and dry
Find you one f easy temper
mo th agape and cant look,
Back fr m Cherso ese ou bring h m
asp him firmly fix y ur hook,
Twist his shoulder back and gl bly
gulp the victim dow at o ce.
And you search amongst the tow smen
f r some lambkin w tted d e,
Wealthy od of trick nd mal ce
sh dd rin t d putes and fuss.

P assail me too, m ma t rs?
t fo you they beat m thus
Tis because I th ght of mo ing
that tw re pr per here to make
Some memorial f you worsh ps
f r nobl alour s sake.

Ch Hear him t ng t cajole !
O the upp e be dings eak
Pla ing off his tricks pon us,
on d t ds ld nd weak
N b t ther my rm shall m te h m
If t pa you there h seek
If he dod e in th d ect
he gainst my l g he butts

P Athens! Dem I see the m sters,
see th m pu h me n th g ts.

Ch Shout g r you? you who always
b our shout b rt the town

S S B t in th ll fi t su pass him
thus I sh t th fellow down

Ch If in ba h g ou d feat h m
s g w e h ! for V t ry s sake.
If in ham lessness ou beat h m
then ndeed w tak th cake.

P I d nou ce th sm g l g f llow
ont band of war h takes
For the P l pon esian ga s,
frapp g th m w th—g dl -cakes.

S S I denou e th y g b f llow
t the Hall from day t day
In he runs with empty bell y
w th a full one hies away

Ch Fish and flesh and bread exporting
and a hundred things l ke these
Contraband of peac which never
were allowed to Per cles.

Pa Death awaits you at once you two

S S Thrice as l ud can I squall as you

Pa No will I bawl you do n by bawl ng

S S N w will I squall you do n by squalling

Pa Lead our armies, a d I'll backb te you

S S I ll with d g wh ps la h you and smite you.

Pa I ll outw t you by fraud and lying

S S I ll y u pettitoes chop for fryin

Pa N w unblinkin re rd me you.

S S I wa b ed n the agora too

Pa S y but g r nd to strips I ll tear you

S S Speak one word and as dung I ll bear you

Pa I con ess th t I steal Do you?

S S Agora Hermes! es, I do
If I m see I m a perjurer too

Pa So nebod else s tricks you re vaunting
Now to the Pryta es off I ll run
T ll them you e got some h ly p g guts
Tell them y u pa d no t the thereon

Ch O illain O hameles of heart
O Bawler and Brawl r self seeking
The land the Assembl the Tolls,
ar ll with thine impudence reek ng
And the Co rts, and th action at law
they re f ll unto loathi g a d hate!
Thou stir est th mud to its depths,
perturbi the whole of the State
Ruffian who hast deaf ned Athens
w th thine everlast ng d n
W tch ng fr m the rocks the trib te
t nny fashion hoal ng n

Pa W ll I know the ery quarter
wher they cobbled up the plot

S S You e a kn w ng ba d at cobbl ng
else n mi cing meat I m n t
You who cheated all the ru tics
with a flabby bullock hide
Cutting it asl nt to make it
look l ke leather firm nd dried
In a day the hoes you sold them
wobbled half a foot too w de

Ar That s the ery tr ck the rascal
played the other day o me
And my fri nds and fello burghers
laughed w th undissembled glee
I was sw mm g i m slippe s
re I got to P rgasae

Ch So the thou hast e en from the first
that sham less br d d played
Which alone is the Orat rs Pat n
And for most of ll b ys its aid
Th u the wealthy stra ers m lkest
dra in off th r rich sup lies
And the son of H ppod mus
watches th w th streaming eyes.
Ah, but a other has d wned on us now

Viler and fouler and coarser than thou
Viler and fouler and coarser by far
One who ll beat thee and defeat thee
(therefore jubilant we are)
Beat thee in jackanapes tricks and rascality
Beat thee in impudence cheek and brutality
O trained where Men are trained who best
deserve that appellation
Now show us of how little worth
is liberal education
S S The sort of citizen he is I ll first expose to view
Pa Give *me* precedence
S S No by Zeus for I m a blackguard too
Ch And if to that he yield not add as all my fathers were
Pa Give *me* precedence
S S No by Zeus
Pa O yes by Zeus
S S I swear
I ll fight you on that very point you never *shall* be first
Pa *O I shall burst*
S S You never shall
Ch O let him let him burst
Pa How dare you try in speech to vie
with *me*? On what rely you?
S S Why I can speak first rate and eke
with piquant sauce supply you
Pa O speak you can! and you re the man
I warrant who is able
A mangled mess full well to dress
and serve it up to table
I know your case, the common case
against some alien folk
You had some petty suit to plead
and fairly well you spoke
For oft you d conned the speech by night
and in the streets discussed it
And quaffing water shown it off
and all your friends disgusted
Now you re an orator you think
O fool the senseless thought!
S S *Pray what s the draught which you have quaffed*
that Athens you have brought
Tongue wheedled by yourself alone
to sit so mute and still?
Pa Who to compare with *me* will dare?
I ll eat my tunny grill
And quaff thereon a stoup of wine
which water shall not touch
And then with scurrilous abuse
the Pylian generals smutch
S S I ll eat the paunch of cow and swine
and quaff thereon their stew
And rising from the board with hands
which water never knew
I ll throttle all the orators and flutter Nicias too
Ch With all beside I m satisfied
but one thing likes me no
You speak as if you ate alone
whatever stew you ve got
Pa You ll not consume your basse and then
Miletus bring to grief
S S But mines I ll purchase when I ve first
devoured my ribs of beef
Pa I ll leap the Council chamber in
and put them all to rout
S S I ll treat you like a sausage skin
and twirl your breech about
Pa *I ll hoist you by your crupper up*
and thrust you through the gate sir
Ch If him you thrust me too you must
you must as sure as fate sir
Pa Your feet in the stocks I ll fix full tight
S S And you for your cowardice I'll indict
Pa Outstretched on my board your hide I ll pin
S S Pickpocket s purse I ll make your skin
Pa Your limbs on the tanhouse floor I ll stake
S S Your flesh into force meat balls I ll bake
Pa I ll twitch the lashes off both your eyes
S S I ll cut your gizzard out poulterer wise
De Prop open his mouth with all your strength
Insert the extender from jaw to jaw
Pull out his tongue to its utmost length
And butcher fashion inspect his maw
And whilst his gape is so broad and fine
See if he s not The symptoms got
Which show that he s nought but a measly swine
Ch There are things then hotter than fire
there are speeches more shameless still
Than the shameless speeches of those
who rule the City at will
No trifling task is before you
upon him and twist and garotte him
Do nought that is little or mean
for round the waist you have got him
If in this assault you knead him
limp and supple to your hand
You will find the man a craven
I his habits understand
S S Truly for an arrant coward
he has all his life been known
Yet a Man he seemed but lately
reaping where he had not sown
Now the ears of corn he brought us
he aspires to parch and dry
Shuts them up in wood and fetters
hopes to sell them by and by
Pa You and your allies I fear not
while the Council lives and while
Demus moons upon the benches
with his own unmeaning smile
Ch O see how he brazens it out!
The colour remains as before
In his shameless impudent face
And O if I hate you not sore
Let me be a filthy sheepskin
that whereon Cratinus lay
Or let Morsimus instruct me
as the Chorus to his Play
Thou in all places and thou at all hours
Flitting and sitting in bribery flowers

Sucking and sipping the gold they contain
Mayest thou Lghtl as twas wallowed,
cast thy mouthful up again.
Then will I ever th roundelay sin,
Drink f r the luck wh ch the Destinies bri g
And old Ia' us son, the pantler Pryt nean
For joy will Bacche Bac hus" shout
and chant his Io-Paean.
Pa. Think ou in shamelessness to win?
No by Poseidon no!
Or may I evermore the feasts
of Ag ra Zeus forgo.
S. S. Now b the knuckles which in youth
would discipline my head
And those hard handled butchers knives
they often used instead
I th..k in sham lessness I'll win
else ainly in the slums
Ha e I t such a bu'k been ea ed
on fing r cleanin crumbs.
Pa On fi ger pellets l ke a dog?
And rea ed on these you seek
T fight a dog faced fierce baboon!
I marvel at your cheek.
S S And lots of other monke tricks
I pra tised as a boy
O how I used to chouse the cooks
b shri king out Ahoy!
Look lads, a swallow! pri s h r
Look p look up I pray
So up they looked whilst I pu loi ed
a piece of meat way
Ch. Shrewd body you were pro dent
and tole was y ur meat
Before the usual swallow came
as folk their n ttles eat
S. S. And no one ca ht me out or else
fa s saw me pot t
I clamped the meat between my thigh
a d owed I had t got t
Whereat an orator observ ed
wh watched me t m tricks,
Some day this boy will mak h mark
a lead r n th P yx.
Ch His nf rence wa just b t stal
us pla f m when e he drew it
H saw ou filch the meat a a
nd swear ou d d t do it
Pa I'll st p your nsolenc m ma
your f end s and ours toceth r
I'll swoop pon you like gal
of f esh and tormy weath
And ll the land and all th sea
i wild confusion throw
S S B t I will furl my sausages,
and down the t de will go
W h pros erous seas, nd fa ourn b eeze
t ou m fin ers snappin,
De And f your bo k a leak hould spri g
th wat I'll be tappi
P Full many al nt ha e ou fil hed
and dea ly shall ou pa
You public treasury thief!
Ch. Look out and slack the sheet away
I hear a loud Nor Easter th re
or Sycophanter blow
Pa From Poudaea you recei ed
ten talents, that I know
S S Will you take one and hold y ur tongue?
Ch He d tak it like a shot
Let out the yard arm ropes a b t
S S The gale has milder got
The storm blast is falling fast
Pa You'll ha e f r bribers and deceit
Four hundred talent writs to meet
S S And you for cowardliness a score
For theft a thousand writs and more.
Pa F om that old sacrileg ous race
I'll say that our descent y u trace
S S You father s father marched I'll swear
As body guard to—
Pa Whom? Declare!
S S To Hippia Byrsine
Pa You jackanapes!
S S You gallows-tree!
Ch Strike like a man!
Pa O help me! Oh!
These plotti trait rs hurt me so.
Ch Strike strike him, well and manfully
And with those entrails beat h m
And stron s of sausage meat and try
Meet pu ishment to mete him
O noblest flesh in all the world
O spirit best and dearest
To City and to citizens
a Sa iour thou appea e t
H w well nd with what varied skill
thou foil st him in debate!
O would that I could praise you so,
sou d li ht is great
P Now b Dem ter t escaped me ot
That these same plots we e framin, w ll I knew
H w they wer pe ged and fixed and glued to-
eth r
Ch O me!
(to vs o sellr) Can t you say som thin fr m
the cartwri ht trade
S S These A gos doi g ha e escaped me not.
He goes, h sa s, to make a friend of Ar os,
But tis with Spa ta h s colloqui there.
Ay and I k ow th a il wh re upon
H s plan is fo ged t s welded on th captives.
Ch Good! good! turn him welding fo his glue
S S And men from th nc re hammering at it
too.
A d ot b bribes of sil er or of gold
Or sendi fri nds, will you persuade me not
To tell the Athenian how you are going on
Pa I'll go thi insta t to the Cou cil board
And all your vile co spira ies denounce
And all our ni htl gatherings in the town
And how you plotted with the Medes and King
And all your cheese p essed doings Boeotia
S S Pray how s cheese selling in Boeotia now?

Pa I ll stretch you flat by Heracles I will *Exit*
Ch Now then what mean you? what are you going to do?
Now shall you show us if in very truth
You stole the meat and hid it as you said
So to the Council house you ll run for he
Will burst in thither and against us all
Utter his lies and bawl a mighty bawl
S S Well I will go but first I ll lay me down
Here as I am these guts and butchers knives
De Here take this ointment and anoint your neck
So can you slip more easily through his lies
S S Well now that s good and trainer like advice
De And next take this and swallow it
S S What for?
De Why if you are garlic primed you ll fight much better
And now begone
S S I m off *Exit*
D And don t forget
To peck to lie to gobble down his combs
And bite his wattles off That done return *Exit*

Chorus

Good bye and good speed may your daring succeed
And Zeus of the Agora help you in need
May you conquer in fight and return to our sight
A Victor triumphant with garlands bedight
But *ye* to our anapaests listen the while
And give us the heed that is due
Ye wits who the Muse of each pattern and style
Yourselves have attempted to woo

If one of the old fashioned Comedy bards
had our services sought to impress
And make us before the spectators appear
to deliver the public address
He would not have easily gained us but now
with pleasure we grant the request
Of a poet who ventures the truth to declare
and detests what we also detest
And against the Tornado and Whirlwind alone
with noble devotion advances
But as for the question that puzzles you most
so that many inquire how it chances
That he never a Chorus had asked for himself
or attempted in person to vie
On this we re commissioned his views to explain
and this is the Poet s reply
That twas not from folly he lingered so long
but discerning by shrewd observation
That Comedy Chorus instruction is quite
the most difficult thing in creation
For out of the many who courted the Muse
she has granted her favours to few
While even as the plants that abide but a year
so shifting and changeful are *you*
And the Poets who flourished before him he saw
ye were wont in their age to betray

Observing the treatment which Magnes received
when his hair was besprinkled with grey
Than whom there was none more trophies had won
in the fields of dramatic display
All voices he uttered all forms he assumed
the Lydian the fig piercing Fly
The Harp with its strings the Bird with its wings
the Frog with its yellow green dye
Yet all was too little he failed in the end
when the freshness of youth was gone by
And at last in his age he was hissed from the stage
when lost was his talent for jeering
Then he thought of Cratinus who flowed through the plains
mid a tumult of plaudits and cheering
And sweeping on all that obstructed his course
with a swirl from their stations he tore them
Oaks rivals and planes and away on his flood
uprooted and prostrate he bore them
And never a song at a banquet was sung
but Doro fig sandaled and true,
Or Framers of terse and artistical verse
such a popular poet he grew
Yet now that he drivels and dotes in the streets,
and Time of his ambers has reft him
And his framework is gaping asunder with age
and his strings and his music have left him
No pity ye show no assistance bestow
but allow him to wander about
Like Connas with coronal withered and sere
and ready to perish with drought
Who ought for his former achievements to *drink*
in the Hall nor be laid on the shelf
But to sit in the Theatre shining and bright
beside Dionysus himself.
And then he remembered the stormy rebuffs
which Crates endured in his day
Who a little repast at a little expense
would provide you then send you away
Who the daintiest little devices would cook
from the driest of mouths for you all
Yet he and he only held out to the end
now standing now getting a fall
So in fear of these dangers he lingered besides
a sailor he thought should abide
And tug at the oar for a season before
he attempted the vessel to guide
And next should be stationed awhile at the prow
the winds and the weather to scan
And then be the Pilot himself for himself
So seeing our Poet began
In a mood so discreet nor with vulgar conceit
rushed headlong before you at first
Loud surges of praise to his honour upraise
salute him all hand with a burst

Of hearty triumphant Lenaean applause
That the bard may depart all radiant and bright
To the top of his forehead with joy and delight
Having gained by your favour his cause
Dread Poseidon the Horseman s King
Thou who lovest the brazen clash

Clash and ner hing of warlike steeds
I eased to watch where the trireme speeds
Purple beaked to the oar s lon swing
W glory (and pa) but chief
Where bri ht youths in their chariots ash
Rac (com perchance to grief)
Cronus son,
Throned on Geraestus and Sunium bold
Swa in th dolphins with trid t of gold
Come O come at th call of us
Dearest to Phormio thou,
Yea and dearest t al of us,
Dearest to all of us now

Le us praise our m ty fathers,
men who ne er would quake or quail,
Worth of thei nati country
worthy of Athen s veil
Men th our fleet and rmies
rywh re th victory won
And adorned ou parent city
b chievements nobly done
Never stayed th y then to reckon
what th numbers of th foe
At the insta t that they saw him,
all their thou ht was At him go!"
If they er n deserat stru
on their shoulder chanced to fall,
Quick they wiped way th dust mark,
swore they er were thrown at all,
Closed a in deadly grapple.
Not of ll our generals bra
Then had stooped a pub banq t
from Cleaenetus t crave
Now unless grant them banqu ts,
grant precedence a their ri ht
They ll fight no more th t ll you.
Our ambition is to fi ht
Freel for our Gods and count
as our fathers fou ht before
N reward or pa eceivin
aski g this and nothin more
When eturns Peace shall set us
free from al our warlike toil,
Grud e us ot our flowin na l ts,
grud e us not our ba hs and oil.

Hail Pallas, our guardian Queen,
Ru o er th holiest land
Land poetic renowned, and strong
F st in battl and first in son
Land hose equal never wa seen,
Com t prosper our Choral band
Bri g t ou with thee th Maiden bright,
H o greets us in every fight
Victory
S th hour-compet t on sides w th us,
Al s gainst our a tagonists sides w th us.
Come gre t Goddess, appea to us,
Now f ev w pra
Bring thou victory dea to us,
Crow thine Horsemen to-day

What we witnessed with our horses
we desire to eulogize.
Worthy they of praise and honour!
many a deed of high emprize,
Many a raid and battle-onset
they with us have jointly shared
Yet their feats ashore surprise not
with their feats afloat compared
When they bought them cans and garlic
bou ht them strin gs of on ons too,
Leapt at once board the tran ports,
all w th manful hearts and true,
Took their seats upon the benches,
dipped their oar blades in the sea
Pulled like any human beings,
nei an out their Hippapae!
Pull ea hearties, pull p r strongest
don t be shirkin Samia brand!"
Then they leapt ashore at Corinth
and the ou est of the band
Hon o ed with their hoofs their couches
or for bedd n searched about
And the fed on crabs, for clo er
f th y m t one crawlin out,
Or detected any lurking
in the Ocean s deepest bed.
Till at length a crab of Corinth,
so Theorus tells us, said
Hard t us, m Lord Poseidon,
if the Kni hts we cannot flee
E en in the depths of Ocean an where by land or
sea"

Enter the SAUSAGE SELLER.

Ch Dearest of men my lustiest trustiest friend
Good lack! how nxious has your absence mad us!
But now that saf and sound ou are come again
Say what has happened nd how went the fight
S-S How else but thus The Council ictor I
Ch. Now may we, jo ous, raise the song of sacred
praise
Fair the words you speak but fairer
Are the deeds ou do.
Far I d go, This I know
But t hear them throu h.
Now then tell us all the story
All that where ou went befell
Fea less be Sure that we
All deli ht in all you tell.
S. S A e and tis worth the hearin When behind
him
I reached th Council-chamber there was he
Crashin and dashin hurling t the Knights
Stra wonder workin thunder-dri ing words,
Callin them all, with all persuadin force
Conspirators And all the Council, hearin
Grew full of l n orach at his talk,
Wore mustard looks, and puckered up their brows.
So when I saw them takin his words,
Gulled b his k a ish tricks, "Ye Gods," said I
Ye Gods of knavery Skitals, and Phenaces,
And y Beresceths, Cobals, M thon, and

Pa I'll stretch you flat by Heracles I will *Exit*

Ch Now then what mean you? what are you going to do?

Now shall you show us if in very truth
You stole the meat and hid it as you said
So to the Council house you'll run for he
Will burst in thither and against us all
Utter his lies and bawl a mighty bawl

S S Well I will go but first I'll lay me down
Here as I am these guts and butchers' knives

De Here take this ointment and anoint your neck
So can you slip more easily through his lies

S S Well now that's good and trainer like advice

De And next take this and swallow it

S S What for?

De Why if you are garlic primed you'll fight much better
And now begone

S S I'm off *Exit*

D And don't forget
To peck to lie to gobble down his combs
And bite his wattles off That done return *Exit*

Chorus

Good bye and good speed may your daring succeed
And Zeus of the Agora help you in need
May you conquer in fight and return to our sight
A Victor triumphant with garlands bedight
But ye to our anapaests listen the while
And give us the heed that is due
Ye wits who the Muse of each pattern and style
Yourselves have attempted to woo

If one of the old fashioned Comedy bards
had our services sought to impress
And make us before the spectators appear
to deliver the public address
He would not have easily gained us but now
with pleasure we grant the request
Of a poet who ventures the *truth* to declare
and detests what we also detest
And against the Tornado and Whirlwind alone
with noble devotion advances
But as for the question that puzzles you most
so that many inquire how it chances
That he never a Chorus had asked for himself
or attempted in person to vie
On this we're commissioned his views to explain
and this is the Poet's reply
That 'twas not from folly he lingered so long
but discerning by shrewd observation
That Comedy Chorus instruction is quite
the most difficult thing in creation
For out of the many who courted the Muse
she has granted her favours to few
While even as the *plants that abide but a year*
so shifting and changeful are *you*
And the Poets who flourished before him he saw
ye were wont in their age to betray
Observing the treatment which Magnes received
when his hair was besprinkled with grey
Than whom there was none more trophies had won
in the fields of dramatic display
All voices he uttered all forms he assumed
the Lydian the fig piercing Fly
The Harp with its strings the Bird with its wings,
the Frog with its yellow green dye
Yet all was too little he failed in the end
when the freshness of youth was gone by
And at last in his age he was hissed from the stage
when lost was his talent for jeering
Then he thought of Cratinus who flowed through the plains
mid a tumult of plaudits and cheering
And sweeping on all that obstructed his course
with a swirl from their stations he tore them
Oaks rivals and planes and away on his flood
uprooted and prostrate he bore them
And never a song at a banquet was sung
but Doro fig sandaled and true
Or Framers of terse and artistical verse
such a popular poet he grew
Yet now that he drivels and dotes in the streets
and Time of his ambers has reft him
And his framework is gaping asunder with age
and his strings and his music have left him
No pity ye show no assistance bestow
but allow him to wander about
Like Connas, with coronal withered and sere
and ready to perish with drought
Who ought for his former achievements to *drink*
in the Hall nor be laid on the shelf
But to sit in the Theatre shining and bright
beside Dionysus himself
And then he remembered the stormy rebuffs
which Crates endured in his day
Who a little repast at a little expense
would provide you then send you away
Who the daintiest little devices would cook
from the driest of mouths for you all
Yet he and he only held out to the end
now standing now getting a fall.
So in fear of these dangers he lingered besides
a sailor he thought should abide
And tug at the oar for a season before
he attempted the vessel to guide
And next should be stationed awhile at the prow
the winds and the weather to scan
And then be the Pilot himself for himself
So seeing our Poet began
In a mood so discreet nor with vulgar conceit
rushed headlong before you at first
Loud surges of praise to his honour upraise
salute him all hands, with a burst

Of hearty triumphant Lenaean applause
That the bard may depart all radiant and bright
To the top of his forehead with joy and delight
Having gained by your favour his cause
Dread Poseidon the Horseman's King
Thou who lovest the brazen clash

Cl. b and hea hing of warlike steeds
P'eased to watch where the trireme speeds
Purple beaked to the oar s long swing
Winning glory (and pay) but chief
Where bright youth in their chariots flash
Racin (comin perchance to grief)
Cronus son
Throned on Geraes us and Sunium bold
Swa n g th d lph s with trident of gold
Come, O com at the call of us
Dearest to Phormio thou,
Yea and dearest t all of us,
Dearest to all of us now

Let u praise our might fathers,
men w ho ne er would quake or quail
Worthy of th r nat cou try
wo thy of Athene s veil
Men ho uth o r fleets and armies
wh r th ctory won
And adorned ou a cient c ty
by a hi ements nobly done
Never stayed they then to reckon
what the numbers of the foe
At the instant that they saw him,
all th thou ht was At h m ge!
If there e er a desperate stru ling
on their shoulder chanced to fal
Quick th w ped a a the dust ma k,
swo e th ne w e thrown at all
Closed aga n in deadly grapple
N n f all ou generals bra e
Then had stooped pub c ba q t
f m Cleaenetu to cra
N w u less ye grant th m ba quet
grant preced nce as their right
They will fight no more they tell you.
Our mb tion is to fight
Freely for our Gods nd ountry
our f thers fou ht before,
No eward or pay rec i ing
k g thi and n thin m re
When returni g Peace shall set u
free from all ur warlik toil,
Grudge ot ou fl win ringl ts,
grud e us not ou baths and oil.

Hol P llas, ou gua dian Queen
R l ov the holies land
Land poetic renowned nd trong
First in battl and fi t in so g
Land hose equal nev wa seen,
Come prosper ou Chor l band!
Bri g hou w th thee the Maiden bright,
H ho g ee us in ery fight
Victory!
She th hot -competit on abides w th us,
Al gainst our t gone t sides w th us.
Come g t Goddess, appea to us,
Now f w pray
Bri g thou ctory dear t us,
Crow thine Horsemen to-day

What w witnessed with our horses
we desire to eulogize.
Worthy they of praise and honour!
many a deed of high emprize
Many a raid and battle-onset
they with us have jointly shared
Yet their feats ash re urprise not
with th ir feats afloat compared
When they bou ht them cans and garlic
bought th m strings of onions too,
Leapt at once aboard the tran ports
all with manful hearts and true
Took their seats upon th benches,
dipped the r oar blades *in the sea*
Pulled like a y human beings,
ei hin out their *H ppapae!*
Pull m hearties, p ll y ur tro gest
don t be l rking S gma brand!
Then th y leapt shore at Corinth
and th oun est of the band
Hol o ed w th their hoofs tl eir couches
or for beddi g searched about
And they fed on crabs, for clo er
if th y m t one crawling out,
Or detected any lurkin
in th Ocean s deepest bed
Till at l ngth a cr b of Corinth,
so Theorus tells us, said
H rd it is, my Lo d Poseidon
if the Kn ht we cannot flee
Even i the depths of Ocean an wher by land or sea

Enter the SAUS GE SELLER.

Ch Dearest of men m lustiest trustiest friend
Good lack! how anxious has your abs nce made us!
But now that safe and sound you re come again
Say what has happe ed a d h w went the fight
S S How lse but thu ? The Council ctor I
Ch Now may we joyous, raise th son of sacred praise
Fair the words you speak but fairer
Are the deeds you d
Fa l d go This I know
But t hear th m th ou h.
Now then t ll us all the story
All that wher you went, befell
Fearless be Sure that we
All deli ht n all you tell
S S A and tis wo th the hearing When behi d him
I eached the Cou cil-chamber th re was he
Cr hi nd dashi hu l ng at the Kn ghts
St ng wond working thund -dri i g words,
Callin them ll with all persuading force
Co rra. ! And all th Cou cil, hearing
G w f ll f lying orach t his talk,
W e mustard look and p ckered up their brows.
So when I saw th m taking n hi wo d
Guiled b his kn sh tricks, Ye God said I
Ye Gods f kna ery Skitals, and I h races,
And ye Be esceths, Cobals, M thon and

Thou Agora whence my youthful training came
Now give me boldness and a ready tongue
And shameless voice! And as I pondered thus
I heard a loud explosion on my right
And made my reverence then I dashed apart
The railing wicket opened wide my mouth
And cried aloud O Council I have got
Some lovely news which first I bring to you
For never never since the War broke out
Have I seen pilchards cheaper than to day
They calmed their brows and grew serene at once
And crowned me for my news and I suggested
Bidding them keep it secret that forthwith
To buy these pilchards many for a penny
Twere best to seize the cups in all the shops
They clapped their hands and turned agape to me
But Paphlagon perceived and well aware
What kind of measures please the Council best
Proposed a resolution Sirs quoth he
I move that for these happy tidings brought
One hundred beeves be offered to Athene
The Council instantly inclined to him
So overpowered with cow dung in a trice
I overshot him with two hundred beeves
And vow said I to slay to morrow morn
If pilchards sell one hundred for an obol
A thousand she goats to our huntress Queen
Back came their heads expectantly to me
He dazed at this went babbling idly on
So then the Prytanes and the Archers seized him
And *they* stood up and raved about the pilchards
And *he* kept begging them to wait awhile
And hear the tale the Spartan envoy brings
He has just arrived about a peace shrieked he
But all the Council with one voice exclaimed
What! Now about a peace? No doubt my man
Now they've heard pilchards are so cheap at Athens!
We want no truces let the War go on!"
With that Dismiss us Prytanes! shouted they
An overleaped the railings everywhere
And I slipped out and purchased all the leeks
And all the coriander in the market
And as they stood perplexed I gave them all
Of my free bounty garnish for their fish
And they so praised and purred about me that
With just one obol's worth of coriander
I've all the Council won and here I am

Ch What rising men should do
Has all been done by you
He the rascal now has met a
Bigger rascal still
Full of guile Plot and wile,
Full of knavish skill
Mind you carry through the conflict
In the same undaunted guise
Well you know Long ago
We're your faithful true allies

S S See here comes Paphlagon driving on before him
A long ground swell all fuss and fury thinking
To drink me up Boh! for your impudent bluster

Enter PAPHLAGON

Pa Oh if I've any of my old lies left
And don't destroy you may I fall to bits!

S S I like your threats I'm wonderfully tickled
To hear you fume I skip and cuckoo around you

Pa O by Demeter if I eat you not
Out of the land I'll never live at all

S S You won't? Nor I unless I drink you up
And swill you up and burst myself withal

Pa I'll crush you by my Pylus won precedence

S S Precedence is it? I'm in hopes to see you
In the last tier instead of here in front

Pa By Heaven I'll clap you in the public stocks.

S S How fierce it's growing! what would it like to eat?
What is its favourite dainty? Money bags?

Pa I'll tear your guts out with my nails I will

S S I'll scratch your Town Hall dinners out I will

Pa I'll hale you off to Demus then you'll catch it

S S Nay I'll hale *you* and then out slander you

Pa Alack poor chap he pays no heed to you
But I can fool him to my heart's content

S S How sure you seem that Demus is your own!

Pa Because I know the titbits he prefers

S S And feed him badly as the nurses do.
You chew and pop a morsel in his mouth
But thrice as much you swallow down yourself

Pa And I'm so dexterous handed I can make
Demus expand and then contract again

S S I can do that with many things I trow

Pa Twon't be like bearding me in the Council now!
No come along to Demus

S S Aye why not?
I'm ready march let nothing stop us now

Pa O Demus come out here

S S O yes by Zeus
Come out my father

Pa Dearest darling Demus,
Come out and hear how they're ill treating me!

Enter DEMUS *and* DEMOSTHENES

Demus What's all this shouting? go away you fellows
You've smashed my harvest garland all to bits!
Who wrongs you Paphlagon?

Pa He and these young men
Keep beating me because of you

Dem Why so?

Pa Because I love you and adore you Demus

Dem (*To* SAUSAGE SELLER) And who are you?

S S A rival for your love
Long have I loved and sought to do you good
With many another honest gentleman
But Paphlagon won't let us You yourself
Excuse me sir are like the boys with lovers.
The honest gentlemen you won't accept
Yet give yourself to lantern selling chaps
To sinew stitchers cobblers aye and tanners

Pa Because I am good to Demus

S S Tell me how

Pa *Twas I slipped in before the general there*
And sailed to Pylus and brought back the Spartans.

S. S. And I walked round and from the workshop st le
A mess of pottage cooked by someone else.
P. Come make a full Assembly out of hand
O Demus, d then find which loves you best
And so decide a d gi e that man your lo e.
S. S. O Dem s, do Not in th Pnyx how er
Dem. Aye, i th Pnyx not elsewhere will I sit.
So forward all, mo e f rward to the Pnyx
S. S. O l less me I m ruined! The old fellow
Is, when t home th bri htest man ali e
B t once h sits upon his rock, he moons
W th open mouth, as one who g pes f r figs.
Demus takes h s seat as the a dience i the mimic Pnyx a d the orators take their places
Ch. Now loosen ery hawse
n w speed your bark alon
And mind your soul is ea r
nd mind our words are stron
No subterfuge admittin
the man ha many a tri k
From hopeless things in h peless times,
a h peful course to pi k
Upon him th a whirlw nd s force
impetuous, fresh and qu ck
B t keep on his m ements a watch nd be su e
that befo he ca deal you blow
You hoi t the mast our d lphins, a d cast
you essel al ngsid the foe
P. T the Lady who er th city p esides,
to our mistress Athen I pray
If beyond all the rest I m stoutest nd best
n th serv of Demus to-day
E cept Salabaccho, and C na th bold
and Lysicles—th t the H ll
Ma I dine as of late t the ost of the St te
f r doing j t nothi g at all
But O f I hate ou, no tnd to th a
to protect you from woes a d mis haps,
The saw m nd flay m and saw me to b ts,
to be cut int martingal straps.
S. S. And I f I love ou t Demus, am gam
t be slaught ed by chopp g nd mi cin
And boiled in a sa sag meat p nd f th t
is, ou think, not e t h con inci
Let me h re f y u please with a morsel of cheese
pon this to a salad be grated
Or i far Ceram us be dra ged throu h th treets
th m flesh hook and th re be c emated
Pa. O Dem s, how can the e be r man
who lo es you s dearly as I?
When on me ou elied your fina ces t guid
ou Treasur e wa d
I begg g f these wh l t those I o ld sq eez
nd ra k t extort what was d e
And nought did I ca how townsma might fa e
so lon as I sat fied o
S. S. Wh Dem s, there othi g to boast of that
to do t I m perfectly bl
T e only to steal from my comrade a meal,
and serv t up h t on your tabl
And as for his l an and w shin, you well
it i n t fo you that he cares,
Excepting indeed for the gain that he gets,
and the snug little f re that he shares.
Why you who at Marathon fought with th Medes,
f r Ath ns d Hellas conte ding
And won the great battle and left us a theme
for our songs and our peeches unend ng
He cares ot a bit that so rou hly you sit
on the rocks, nor has dreamed of pro id ng
Those seats w th the thing I ha e stitched you and bring
Just lift yourself up and subside in
This ease gi in cushion for fear you should g ll
what at Salamis sat by the oar
Dem. Who are yo ? I opine you are sprung from the line
of Harmod us famous of yore
So noble and Demus-rel eving a act
I ne er ha e w tnessed before!
Pa. O me by what paltry attentions and gifts
you contri e to attract and delude h m!
S. S. 'Twas b baits that are smaller and poorer tha mi e
you rascal you hooked and subdued him
Pa. Was there e er a ma since the City began
who for Dem has do such a lot
Or f u ht for his welfa e so stoutly as I?
I will wa r my head there is n t
S. S. You l ve him ri ht well who permit him to d ell
eight years in the cl fts of the City
I the nests of the vultu i turrets a d ca ks
n e er assist him or pity
B t keep him i durance to rifle his hi e
and that is th reason no doubt
Why the peace whi h unsought Arch ptolemus b ught
y u we quick from th city to scout
A d s fo the embass es coming to treat
you spanked th m a d chi ied them out
P. That o r all Hellas our Demus may rule
f d not the oracles say
He will su ely hi rd cts in Arcady g
recei i five bols a day
If h grow ot aweary of fi ht g? Meanwhile
it is I wh w ll no ri h a d pet him
A d lways the da l triobol he earns,
u justly or justly I ll get him
S. S. No ot that o er Arcad Demu may ul
but rath r that you might essay
T ha ry and plunder the cities at will,
whil Demus lookin away
And th war with the haze and the dust that you raise
is obscurin your a t n f m view
And Dem s, constrained b his wants a d his pay
is a gaping d pende t on you
But if one t the country in peace he ret rns,
away fr m all fi hting and fusses,
A d t ength ns hi sy tem w th furmety there
and a confect of ol e discusses.

He will know to your cost what a deal he has lost
while the pay you allowed him he drew
And then like a hunter irate he will come
on the trail of a vote against you
You *know* it and Demus you swindle with dreams
crammed full of yourself and your praises
Pa It is really distressing to hear you presume
to arraign with such scurrilous phrases
Before the Athenians and Demus a man
who more for the city has done
Than e er by Demeter Themistocles did
who glory undying has won
S S O city of Argos! yourself would you match
with mighty Themistocles him
Who made of our city a bumper ind ed
though he found her scarce filled to the brim
Who while she was lunching Peiraeus threw in
as a dainty additional dish
Who secured her the old while providing untold
and novel assortments of fish
Whilst you with your walls of partition forsooth
and the oracle chants which you hatch
Would dwarf and belittle the city again
who yourself with Themistocles match!
And *he* was an exile but *you* upon crumbs
Achillean your fingers are cleaning
Pa Now is it not monstrous that I must endure
accusations so coarse and unmeaning
And all for the love that I bear you?
Dem Forbear! no more of your wrangle and row!
Too long have your light fingered tricks with my
bread
my notice escaped until now
S S He s the vilest of miscreants Demus and
works
more mischief than any I vow
While you re gaping about he is picking from out
Of the juiciest audit the juiciest sprout
And devours it with zest while deep in the chest
Of the public exchequer both hands are addressed
To ladling out cash for himself I protest
Pa All this you ll deplore when it comes to the
fore
That of drachmas you stole thirty thousand or
more
S S Why make such a dash with your oar blades
and thrash
The waves into foam with your impotent splash?
Tis but fury and sound and you ll shortly be
found
The worst of the toadies who Demus surround
And proof I will give or I ask not to live
That a bribe by the Mitylenaeans was sent
Forty minas and more to your pockets it went
Ch O s nt to all the nation
a blessing and a boon!
O wondrous flow of langua e!
Fight thus and you ll be soon
The greatest man in Hellas
and all the State command
And rule our faithful true allies
a trident in your hand
Wherewith you ll gather stores of wealth
by shaking all th land
And if he lend you once a hold
then never let him go
With ribs like these you ought with ease
to subjugate the foe
Pa O m tters have not come to that
my very worthy friends!
I ve done a deed a noble deed
a deed which so transcends
All other deeds that all my foes
of speech are quite bereft
While any shred of any shield
from Pylus brought is left
S S Halt at those Pylian shields of yours!
a lovely hold you re lending
For if you really Demus love
what meant you by suspendin
Those shields with all their handles on
for action ready strapped?
O Demus there s a dark design
within those handles wrapped
And if to punish him you seek
those shields will bar the way
You see the throng of tanner lads
he always keeps in pay
And round them dwell the folk who sell
their honey and their cheeses
And these are all combined in one
to do whate er he pleases
And if the oyster shelling game
you seem inclined to play
They ll come by night with all their might
and snatch those shields away
And then with ease will run and seize
the passes of—your wheat
Dem Oh are the handles really there?
You rascal what deceit
Have you so long been practising
that Demus you may cheat?
Pa Pray don t be every speaker s gull
nor dream you ll ever get
A better friend than I who all
conspiracies upset
Alone I crushed them all and now
if any plots are brewing
Within the town I scent them down
and raise a grand hallooing
S S O ay you re like the fisher folk
the men who hunt for eels
Who when the mere is still and clear
catch nothing for their creels,
But when they rout the mud about
and stir it up and down
Tis then they do and so do you
when you perturb the town
But answer me this single thing
you sell a lot of leather
You say you re passionately fond
of Demus—tell me whether
You ve given a clout to patch his shoes
Dem No never I declare

S. S. You see the sort f man he is!
but I I've bought a pair
Of good stout shoes, and h re they ar
I gi e them you to wear
Dem. O worthy patriotic gift!
I really don t suppose
There ever li ed a man so kind
to Demus and his toes.
Pa. 'Tis shameful that a pa r of shoes
should ha e the power and might
To put th fa ours I conferred
ntirely out of sight
I who struck Gryttus from th l ts,
and stopped th boy lo es quite.
S. S. 'Tis shameful, I with truth retort,
that you should love to pry
nto such ile degrad crimes
a that you name. And why?
Because you fear twill mak the boys
for public speaking fit
B t Dem s, at his age, you see
w thout a tunic sit
In winter too and nou ht from yo
hi poverty relieves,
B t her s a tunic I have brought
well lined with double sleeves.
Dem. O why Themistocles himself
ne er thought of such a vest!
Peiraeus wa cle er thing
but yet, I do p otest
That on the whole, between the two,
I like the tun best
Pa. (*to s usage seller*) Pah! would you circum
ent m thus,
w th such n apish jest?
S. S Nay as on guest at supper tim
will take nother shoes,
When dire occasion calls him out
so I your methods use.
Pa. Fawn on you won t outdo m there
I ll wrap him round bout
W th th of mine Now go and whi e, you rascal
Dem. Pheu h! get out!
(*to p phlagon r per*) Go to the crows, you
brute, with that
disgusting smell of leather
S. S. H did t for th purpose, Sir
t bol you altogether
H tried t d t onc before
don t yo remembe when
A stalk f silphium sold so cheap?
Dem. Remember? es what then?
S. S. Why that was his contrivance too
he managed ther should be
Su l for all t buy and eat
nd n the Heliaea
The dica ts on nd ll were seized
with iolent diarrhoea
Dem. O a a Coprolitish man
described th sad ffair
S.-S. And worse and worse nd worse you g ew
till yellow tailed you were

Dem. It must have been Pyrrhander s trick,
the fool with yellow hair
Pa. (*to sausage seller*) With what tomfooleries,
you rogue, you harass and torment me.
S. S. Yes, tis with humbug I m to win
f r that the Goddes sent me
Pa. You shall not win! O Demus dear
be idle all the day
And I ll pro ide you free to swill,
a foaming bowl of—pay
S.-S. And I'll this gallipot pro ide,
and heal ng cream with n it
Whereb the sores upon your shins
you ll doctor n minute
Pa. I'll pick these grey hairs neatly out
and make you oung and fa r
S. S. See here this hare scut take to wipe
your darling eyes with care
Pa. Vouchsafe to blow our nose and clean
your fin ers on my hair
S. S. No, no on mine on m on mine!
Pa. A trierarch s office you shall fill,
And by my nfluenc I ll pre ail
That you shall get, to test your skill
A battered hull with tattered sail.
Your outlay and your build ng too
On such a ship will never end
No end of work you ll ha e to do,
N end of cash you'll ha e to spend
Ch. O see how foamy ful he gets,
Good Hea ens, h s boiling over stay!
Some sticks beneath him draw away
Bal out a ladleful of threats.
Pa. Rar punishment f r this you'll taste
I'll make the taxes wei h you down
Amongst the wealthiest of the town
I ll manage that your name is placed
S. S. I will not use a si le threat
I only most d outly wish
That on your brazier may be set
A hissin pa of cuttle fish
And you the Assembly must address
Abo t Miletus,— tis job
Whi h, if t meets entire success,
Will put a talent in your fob—
And O that ere your feast begin,
Th Assembly waits," your friend may cry
And you, afire th f e to w n
And very l th to lose the fry
Ma tri e in greedy ha te to swallow
Th cuttles and be ch ked thereby
Ch. Good! Good! by Zeus, Demeter and
Apollo.
Dem. Ay od in all espects h seems to me
A worthy ci izen When l ved a man
So good to the Many (the Many f r penny)?
You I phlagon, pretendin that ou lo ed me,
Primed m w th garlic G m back my rin
You shall no more be teward

[1]This line is in prose is the solem form l used in the heliastic oath

Pa Take the ring
And be you sure if I m no more your guardian
You ll get instead a greater rogue than I
Dem Bless me this can t be mine this signet ring
It s not the same device it seems to me
Or can t I see?
S S *What s the device on yours?*
Dem A leaf of beef fat stuffing roasted well
S S No that s not here
Dem What then?
S S A cormorant
With open mouth haranguing on a rock
Dem Pheugh!
S S What s the matter?
Dem Throw the thing away
He s got Cleonymus s ring not mine
Take this from me and you be steward now
Pa O not yet master I beseech not yet
Wait till you ve heard my oracles I pray
S S And mine as well
Pa And if to *his* you listen
You ll be a liquor skin
S S And if to *his*
You ll find yourself severely circumcised
Pa Nay mine foretell that over all the land
Thyself *shalt rule with roses garlanded*
S S And mine that crowned in spangled purple robe
Thou in thy golden chariot shalt pursue
And sue the lady Smicythe and her lord
Pa Well go and fetch them hither so that *he*
May hear them
S S Certainly and you fetch yours
Pa Here goes *Exit to house of* DEMUS
S S Here goes by Zeus There s nought to stop us *Exit*

Chorus

O bright and joyous day
O day most sweet to all
Both near and far away
The day of Cleon s fall
Yet in our Action mart
I overheard by chance
Som ancient sires and tart
This counter plea advance
That but for him the State
Two things had ne er possessed —
A *stirrer* up of hate
A *pestle* of unrest

His swine bred music we
With wondering hearts admire
At school his mates agree
He always tuned his lyre
In Dorian style to play
His master wrathful grew
He sent the boy a way
And this conclusion drew
This boy from all his friends
Donations seeks to wile
His art begins and ends
In Dono-do-rian style

Pa (*re entering*) Look at them see! and there are more behind
S S (*re entering*) O what a weight! and there are more behind
Dem What *are* they?
Pa Oracles!
Dem All?
Pa You seem surprised
By Zeus I ve got a chestful more at home
S S And I a garret and two cellars full
Dem Come let me see Whose oracles are these?
Pa Mine are by Bakis
Dem (*To* SAUSAGE SELLER) And by whom are yours?
S S Mine are by Glanis Bakis elder brother
Dem What do they treat of?
Pa Mine? Of Athens Pylus
Of you of me of every blessed thing
Dem (*To* SAUSAGE SELLER) And you of what treat yours?
S S Of Athens pottage
Of Lacedaemon *mackerel freshly caught*
Of swindling barley measurers in the mart
Of you of me That nincompoop be hinged
Dem Well read them out and prithee don t forget
The one I love to hear about myself
That I m to soar an Eagle in the clouds
Pa Now then give ear and hearken to my words
Heed thou well Erechtheides
the oracle s drift which Apollo
Out of his secret shrine
throu h priceless tripods delivered
Keep thou safely the dog
thy jag toothed holy protector
Yapping before thy feet
and terribly roaring to guard thee
He thy pay will provide
if he fail to provide it he ll perish
Yea for many the daws
that are hating and cawing against him
Dem This, by Demeter beats me altogether
What does Erechtheus want with daws and dog?
Pa I am the dog I bark aloud for you
And Phoebus bids you guard the dog that s me
S S It says not that but this confounded dog
Has gnawn the oracle as he gnaws the door
I ve the right reading here about the dog
Dem Let s hear but first I ll pick me up a stone
Lest this dog oracle take to gnawing *me*
S S Heed thou well Erechtheides
the kidnapping Cerberus ban-dog
Wagging his tail he stands
and fawning upon thee at dinner
Waiting thy slice to devour
when aught distract thine attention
Soon as the night comes round
he steals unseen to the kitchen
Dog wise then will his tongue
clean out the plates and the—islands.
Dem Aye by Poseidon Glanis that s far better
Pa Nay listen first my friend and then decide
Woman she is but a lion
she ll bear us in Athens the holy

One who for Demus will fi ht
with an army of stinwin, mosqu toes,
F ht as if shielding his whelps
hom see thou gua d w th de otion
Building a wooden wall
and a ron fort to secure him.
Do you understand?
Dem By Apollo no not I
P The God, us plain would have you keep me safe!
For I'm a valiant lion for your sak
Dem. What you Antileon and I ne er k ew it!
S S O th gh purposely t f rm you not
What that oracular wall of wood a d iron
Where Loxias bids you ke p him safely s.
Dem What means the God?
S S He means that you re to clap
Paphlagon in the fi e holed pillory stocks.
Dem I should t be su prised I that came true.
Pa Heed not the words for jealous
the crow that are croakin against me
Cherish the lordly falcon
nor e r forget that he brou ht thee,
Brou ht thee t fetters and chains
the you g Laconian min ows.
S S This did Paphlagon dare
in a moment of drunken bra ado
Why think much f the deed
Cecropides foolish in counsel?
Weight a Woman will bea
f a Man impose it upon her
Fight sh wo t and she can t
in l ghti g h s lwas s a fright in.
P N y but remember the word
How Pylus, he sa d befo Pylus
Pylus there is before Pylus.
Dem What mea ou by that befor Pylus ?
S S Truly your pil of baths
all he capture before you can take them
Dem O dear then bathless must I go to-day
S S Because h has carried off our pile of baths.
B t here n oracl bout the fleet
Your best attention is required t this
Dem I ll g e t too but prithee first of all,
Read how m sailor a e to get their pay
S S O Aegeides, beware
of the hound fox, lest he dec e thee
Stealthily snapping th craft
the sw ft the tricky marauder
Know ou the meanin of this?
Dem Philostratus, plainl the hound f x
S S Not so but Paphlagon is ve mo e
Asking sw ft triremes t ollect the sil e
So Loxia bid you not t g e him these
Dem Why n tri eme called a I ound f x
S S Why?
A eme s fleet hound s also fl et
Dem B t for what reason add he fo t hound"?
S S The troops, he means, esemble littl fo es,
Because they scour the farm and eat the grapes.
Dem. Good
B t where s the cash t pay these little fo es?

S S That I ll pro ide within three days I'll do it
List thou further the red
by the son of Leto delivered
Keep thou aloof, said he
from the wiles of hollow Cyllene"
Dem Hollow Cyllene! what s that?
S S 'Tis Paphlag n s hand he s describing
Paphla on s outstretched hand
with his Dr p me a coin in the hollow
Pa There thus fellow is wrong
When he spake of th hollow Cyllene,
Phoebus was h ntin I ween
at th han l of the maimed Diopeithes.
Nay but I e got me for you
a winged oracular message
Thou shalt an Ea le becom
and rule all lands as a Monarch
S S Na but I ve got me the same
and the Red Sea too thou shalt govern
Yea in Ecbata ia jud e
rich cakes s tl ou judgest devouring
Pa Nay b it I dreamed m a dream
and methou t the Goddess Athene
Health and wealth was ladlin
in ple uful streams upon Dem s.
S S N y but I d eamed one m self
and meth u ht of the Goddess Athene
Down from the Citadel st pped
and an owl sat perched on her shoulder
Then from a bucket she poured
ambrosia down upon Demus,
S eetest of scents upon *you*
upon Paphlagon sou est of pickles.
Dem Good! Good!
There never *wa* cleverer chap than Cl anis.
So now my f nd I yield myself t you
Be you the tutor f my thoughtless—Age
Pa Not yet? pray wa t awhile and I ll pro ide
Your barley grain and da ly su t na e
Dem I can t abid your ba l y talk too often
Ha e I been duped by you and Thuphanes.
Pa I ll give you barley meal, all ready mad
S S I ll gi e you barl y-cakes, all ready baked
And well broiled fish Do nothing lse b t eat
Dem Make ha t and do t then remembering th s,
Whiche er brings me most t this to-day
To him lone I ll gi the Pnyx s reins.
Pa O th n I ll run s fir t *Exit*
S S Not you but I *Exit*

Ch. P oud O Demus thy sway
Thee, as Ty ant and King
All men fear and obey
Y t O y t us a thing
Easy t lead thee tray
Empty fawnin and praise
Pleased thou art to receive
All each orator says
Sure at nce t believe
W t thou ha t but t oming
Ne er we find t is h me in.

Dem Wit there s none in your hair
What you think me a fool!
What you know not I wear
Wear my motley by rule!
Well all day do I fare
Nursed and cockered by all
Pleased to fatten and train
One prime thief in my stall
When full gorged with his gain
Up that instant I snatch him
Strike one blow and dispatch him

Ch Art thou really so deep?
Is such artfulness thine?
Well for all if thou keep
Firm to this thy design
Well for all if as sheep
Marked for victims thou feed
These thy knaves in the Pnyx
Then if dainties thou need
Haste on a victim to fix
Slay the fattest and finest
There s thy meal when thou dinest

Dem Ah! they know *not that I*
Watch them plunder and thieve
Ah! tis easy they cry
Him to gull and deceive
Comes *my* turn by and by!
Down their gullet full quick
Lo my verdict tube coils
Turns them giddy and sick
Up they vomit their spoils
Such with rogues is my dealing
'Tis for *myself* they are stealing

Enter PAPHLAGON *and* SAUSAGE SELLER

Pa Go and be blest!
S S Be blest yourself you filth
Pa O Demus I ve been sitting here prepared
Three ages past longing to do you good
S S And I ten ages aye twelve ages aye
A thousand ages ages ages ages
Dem And I ve been waiting till I loathe you both
For thirty thousand ages ages ages
S S Do—know you what?
Dem And if I don t you ll tell me
S S Do start us from the signal post us two
All fair no favour
Dem Right you are move off
Pa and S S Ready!
Dem Away!
S S No cutting in allowed
Dem Zeus! if I don t with these two lovers have
A rare good time tis dainty I must be
Pa See I m the first to bring you out a chair
S S But not a table I m the firstlier there
Pa Look here s a jolly little cake I bring
Cooked from the barley grain I brought from Pylus
S S And here I m bringing splendid scoops of bread
Scooped by the Goddess with her ivory hand
Dem A mighty finger you must have dread lady!
Pa And here s pease porridge beautiful and brown
Pallas Pylaemachus it was that stirred it
S S O Demus plain it is the Goddess guards you
Holding above your head this—soup tureen
Dem Why think you Athens had survived unless
She plainly o er us held her soup tureen?
Pa This slice of fish the Army frightener sends you
S S This boiled broth meat the Nobly fathered gives you
And this good cut of tripe and guts and paunch
Dem And well done she to recollect the peplus.
Pa The Terror crested bids you taste this cake
With roe of fish that we may row the better
S S And now take these
Dem Whatever shall I do
With these insides?
S S The Goddess sends you these
To serve as planks inside your ships of war
Plainly she looks with favour on our fleet
Here drink this also mingled three and two
Dem Zeus! but it s sweet and bears the three parts well
S S Tritogeneia twas that three I and two d it
Pa Accept from me this slice of luscious cake
S S And this whole luscious cake accept from me
Pa Ah you ve no hare to give him that give I
S S O me wherever can I get some hare?
Now for some mountebank device my soul
Pa Yah see you this poor Witless?
S S What care I?
For there they are! Yes there they are coming!
Pa Who?
S S Envoys with bags of silver all for me
Pa Where? Where?
S S What s that to you? Let be the strangers.
My darling Demus take the hare I bring
Pa You thief you ve given what wasn t yours to give!
S S Poseidon yes you did the same at Pylus
Dem Ha! Ha! what made you think of filching that?
S S The thought s Athene s but the theft was mine
De Twas I that ran the risk!
Pa Twas I that cooked it!
Dem Be off the credit s his that served it up
Pa Unhappy me! I m over impudenced
S S Why not give judgement Demus of us two
Which is the better towards your paunch and you?
Dem Well what s the test will make the audience think
I give my judgement cleverly and well?
S S I ll tell you what teal softly up and search
My hamper first then Paphlagon s, and note
What s in them then you ll surely judge aright
Dem Well what does *yours* contain?
S S See here it s empty
Dear Father mine I served up all for you
Dem A Demus-loving hamper sure enough

S S Now come along and look at Paphlagon s.
H only see!
Dem Why here a store of dainties!
Why here s a splendid cheesecake he put by!
And me he ga e the ti est slice so big
S S And, Demus, that s what he lways does
G ves you the pett est mo sel f his gains,
A d keeps by far the la est share himself.
Dem O miscreant did you steal and g ll me so,
The hile I crowned th pow nd g ed thee g fues.
Pa And if I stole twa f r the public good.
Dem Off with your c own this instant and I ll place it
On *h m* instead.
S S Off w th it filth this n tant
Pa Not so a Pythian oracle I eg t
Describ ng him ho nl can defeat me
S S Describ *me* w thout the l htest doubt
Pa W ll the I ll test and pr e you t d scern
How far ou tally ith the God s predictions
A d fir t I ask this quest on —when a boy
T ll me the teach r t whose school you went
S S Hard knuckles drilled me in the sin eing pits.
P How say you? Hea ens, the oracl s wo d strikes home!
W ll!
What t th trai e s d d y u learn to d ?
S S F rswear my thefts, and st re the ccuser down
P Phoebus Apollo! Lyci what means this?
Tel m hat trad ou pra tised when man
S S I sold sausages—
Pa W ell?
S S And sold myself.
P L happy m ! I m done f The remains
On slende h pe wh con to an ho y t
Where did you sell your sausa es D d ou t nd
W thin th Agora or besi de th Gates?
S S Beside the G tes, whe e the salt fish is sold
P Om th ora le ha ll come tru !
Rol n, roll n, this most unhappy ma
O own, fa ew ll. Un illing! I lea thee
Be ore b t thee some th r w ll obtai
A luck *r ru* pe cha e but n t more—thievish
S S H lla u *Zeus*, the tory prize is thine!
De Hail mighty V tor r f rees t at I
Mad ou a M and grant this small eq est
M k me ou Pha us, sign f your writs.
Dem Your nam what t?
S S Agora itus.
A Agor I f th ed nd thri ed by wr ngling
Dem T Agora ritus I commit myself
And t *his* harge consign th P phlagon
S S And Demus, I w ll lways tend ou w ll,
And ou shall own the e n t l ed a man
Kind tha I t the E ergaping Cat
Exeunt all but Ho t ho se f Demus

Chorus

O hat is a obler thin
Beginning or nding a song
For horsemen who joy in driving
Their fleet foot coursers alon
Than—Ne er to launch a lampoon
at Lysistratus, scurvy buffoon
Or at heartless Thumant s to gi d
poor starvel n n l htness of heart
Who s weepin hot tears at thy shri e
Apollo, in Pytho di ine
And clutching thy qu ver implo es
to be healed of his po rty s smart!

For lampoon n worthless wretches,
none should bear the bard a grud e
'Tis a sound and wholesome practice
if the case you rightly judge
Now if he whose e l-doings
I mu t need expose to blame
Were himself a noted person
ne er had I named the name
Of a man I love and honour
Is there one who knows not well
Arignotus princ of harpers?
No e bel eve me who can tell
How the whitest colour d ffers
from the st ring tune he plays.
Arignotus has a brother
(not a brother in his ways)
Named Ariphrades, a rascal—
nay but that s the fellow s whim—
Not an ordinary rascal
or I had not not ced him
Not a thorou h rascal merely
he s in ented somethin mo e
N el fo ms of self poll tion
bestial tricks unknown befo e.
Yea to nam less filth a d horrors
does the loathsome wretch desce d
Works the work of P lymnestus,
call Oeon hus his friend
Whoso loathes n t such a m nster
never hall be a friend of m e
N er from the selfsame g blet
quaff w th us, the rosy wine
And oft in the watches of night
My spirit w thin me is thrilled
To think of Cleo ymus eats
As thou h h w uld ne e be filled
O wh nce could the fellow acquire
that appet te deadly and dire?
Th y say whe he grazes w th those
whose table w th plenty is stored
That they ne r can get him away
from the t en h r tho h humbly they pray
Ha e me cy O ki and depa t!
O spare we beseech thee the board!

R cently us said our galleys
met their p ospects to discuss,
And an old experienced trir me
introd ced the s bject thus
"Ha e y heard the news, my sisters?
tis th talk in e ery street,

That Hyperbolus the worthless
 vapid townsman would a fleet
Of a hundred lovely galleys
 lead to Carthage far away
Over every prow there mantled
 deep resentment and dismay
Up and spoke a little galley
 yet from man s pollution free
Save us! such a scurvy fellow
 never shall be lord of me
Here I d liefer rot and moulder
 and be eaten up of worms
Nor Nauphante Nauson s daughter
 shall he board on any terms
I like you can feel the insult
 I m of pine and timber knit
Wherefore if the measure passes
 I propose we sail and sit
Suppliant at the shrine of Theseus
 or the Dread Avenging Powers
He shall ne er as our commander
 fool it o er this land of ours
If he wants a little voyage
 let him launch his sale trays those
Whereupon he sold his lanterns
 steering to the kites and crows

Enter SAUSAGE SELLER

S S O let not a word of ill omen be heard
 away with all proof and citation
And close for to day the Law Courts though they
 are the joy and delight of our nation
At the news which I bring let the theatre ring
 with Paeans of loud acclamation
Ch O Light of the City O Helper and friend
 of the islands we guard with our fleets
What news have you got? O tell me for what
 shall the sacrifice blaze in our streets?
S S Old Demus I ve stewed till his youth is
 renewed
 and his aspect most charming and nice is
Ch O where have you left him and where is
 he now
 you inventor of wondrous devices?
S S He dwells in the City of ancient renown
 which the violet chaplet is wearing
Ch O would I could see him! O what is his garb
 and what his demeanour and bearing?
S S As when for his mess mates Miltiades bold
 and just Aristeides he chose
But now ye shall see him for listen the bars
 of the great Propylaea unclose
Shout shout to behold as the portals unfold
 fair Athens in splendour excelling
The wondrous the ancient the famous in song
 where the noble Demus is dwelling!
Ch O shining old town of the violet crown,
 O Athens the envied display
The Sovereign of Hellas himself to our gaze
 the monarch of all we survey

Enter DEMUS

S S See see where he stands no vote in his hands
 but the golden cicala his hair in
All splendid and fragrant with peace and with
 myrrh
 and the grand old apparel he s wearin !
Ch Hail Sovereign of Hellas! with thee we rejoice
 right glad to behold thee again
Enjoying a fate that is worthy the State
 and the trophy on Marathon s plain
Dem O Agoracritus my dearest friend
What good your stewing did me!
S S Say you so?
Why if you knew the sort of man you were
And what you did you d reckon me a god
Dem What was I like? What did I do? Inform
 me
S S First if a speaker in the Assembly said
O Demus I m your lover I alone
Care for you scheme for you tend and love you
 well
I say if anyone began like that
You clapped your wings and tossed your horns
Dem What I?
S S Then in return he cheated you and left
Dem O did they treat me so and I not know it!
S S Because by Zeus your ears would open wide
And close again like any parasol
Dem Had I so old and witless grown as that?
S S And if by Zeus two orators proposed
One to build ships of war one to increase
Official salaries the salary man
Would beat the ships of war man in a canter
Hallo! why hang your head and shift your ground?
Dem I am ashamed of all my former faults
S S You re not to blame pray don t imagine
 that
Twas they who tricked you so But answer this
If any scurvy advocate should say
Now please remember justices ye ll have
No barley if the prisoner gets off free
How would you treat that scurvy advocate?
Dem I d tie Hyperbolus about his neck
And hurl him down into the Deadman s Pit
S S *Why now you are speaking sensibly and well*
How else in public business will you act?
Dem First when the sailors from my ships of war
Come home I ll pay them all arrears in full
S S For that full many a well worn rump will
 bless you
Dem Next when a hoplite s placed in any list
There shall he stay and not for love or money
Shall he be shifted to some other list
S S That bit the shield strap of Cleonymus
Dem No beardless boy shall haunt the agora
 now
S S That s rough on Straton and on Cleisthenes
Dem *I mean those striplings in the perfume mart*
Who sit them down and chatter stuff like this
Sharp fellow Phaeax wonderful defence
Coercive speaker most conclusive speaker
Effective argumentative incisive
Superlative against the combative

S. S. You e qu te dens e f these talkati es.

Dem I d make them all go u their polit es,

And go a hunti with their hounds in tead.

S S Then on these t rms accept this folding stool

And here s a boy to carry t behi d ou.

N em ach bel

Dem O I shall be onc more

A happy Demus s in days gone b

S S I think you'll think so when ou t the sweet

That ear treat es. Treaties dear come here

Dem Wors i ful Zeus h w beaut ful they re

Would r I like to solemnize them all.

Whence got you these?

S S Why had not Paphlagon

Bott ed them up that ou m ht ne er see them?

N w then I freely gi e you them to take

Ba k to your farms, w th you.

Dem But Paphlagon

Who wrought all this, how will ou puni h *him*?

S S Not much this only he shall ply m trade,

Sol sausage seller at the City gates.

There let him dogs meat mi w th asses flesh,

There let h m, tipsy w th th harl t wrangle,

And drink the filthy sc urin of the bath.

Dem A happ thought and very fit he is

To brawl with harlots and with bathmen there.

But you I a k to d ner in the H ll,

To tak the place that scullion held before

Put on thi fro green robe and follow me.

Whilst him they carry out to ply his trade,

That so the tran rs, whom he wronged may see him.

THE CLOUDS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

STREPSIADES	WRONG LOGIC
PHEIDIPPIDES	PASIAS
SERVANT OF STREPSIADES	AMYNIAS
STUDENT OF SOCRATES	A WITNESS
SOCRATES	CHAEREPHON
RIGHT LOGIC	CHORUS OF CLOUDS

At the back of the stag are two buildings—the house of STREPSIADES *and the* PHRONTISTERION *The interior of the first is exposed to view by means of the eccyclema*

STREPSIADES *and* PHEIDIPPIDES *discovered in bed*

Strepsiades O dear! O dear!
O Lord! O Zeus! these nights how long they are
Will they ne er pass? will the day never come?
Surely I heard the cock crow hours ago
Yet still my servants snore These are new customs
O ware of war for many various reasons
One fears in war even to flog one s servants
And here s this hopeful son of mine wrapped up
Snoring and sweating under five thick blankets
Come we ll wrap up and snore in opposition
Tries to sleep
But I can t sleep a wink devoured and bitten
By ticks and bugbears duns and race horses
All through this son of mine *He* curls his hair
And sports his thoroughbreds and drives his tandem
Even in dreams he rides while I—I m ruined
Now that the Moon has reached her twentieths
And paying time comes on Boy! light a lamp
And fetch my ledger now I ll reckon up
Who are my creditors and what I owe them
Come let me see then *Fifty pounds to Pasias!*
Why fifty pounds to Pasias? what were they for?
O for the hack from Corinth O dear! O dear!
I wish my eye had been hacked out before—
Pheidippides (*in his sleep*) You are cheating Philon keep to your own side
St Ah! there it is! that s what has ruined me!
Even in his very sleep he thinks of horses
Ph (*in his sleep*) How many heats do the war chariots run?
St A pretty many heats you have run your father
Now then what debt assails me after Pasias?
A curricle and a wheel Twelve pounds Amynias
Ph (*in his sleep*) Here give the horse a roll and take him home
St You have rolled me *out* of house and home my boy
Cast in some suits already while some swear
They ll seize my goods for payment
Ph Good my father
What makes you toss so restless all night long?
St There s a bumbailiff from the mattress bites me
Ph Come now I prithee let me sleep in peace
St Well then you sleep only be sure of this
These debts will fall on your own head at last
Alas alas!
Forever cursed be that same match maker
Who stirred me up to marry your poor mother
Mine in the country was the pleasantest life
Untidy easy going unrestrained
Brimming with olives sheepfolds honey bees
Ah! then I married—I a rustic—her
A fine town lady niece of Megacles
A regular proud luxurious Coesyra
This wife I married and we came to eth r
I rank with wine lees fig boards greasy woolpacks
She all with scents and saffron and tongue kissings,
Feasting expense and lordly modes of loving
She was not idle though she was too fast
I used to tell her holding out my cloak
Threadbare and worn Wife you re too fast by half
Enter SERVANT BOY
Servant Boy Here s no more oil remaining in the lamp
St O me! what made you light the tippling lamp?
Come and be whipp d
S B Why what would you whip me for?
St Why did you put one of those thick wicks in?
Well when at last to me and my good woman
This hopeful son was born our son and heir
Why then we took to wrangle on the name
She was for giving him some knightly name
Callippides Xanthippus or Charippus
I wished Pheidonides his grandsire s name
Thus for some time we argued till at last
We compromised it in Pheidippides
This boy she took and used to spoil him saying
Oh! when you are driving to the Acropolis clad
Like Megacles in your purple whilst I said
Oh! when the goats you are driving from the fells
Clad like your father in your sheepskin coat
Well he cared nought for my advice but soon

A growing consumption that has caught my fortunes.
Now coming all night long I've found
One way one marvellous transcendent way
Which if he'll follow we may yet be saved.
So—but however I must rouse him first
But how to rouse him kindliest? that's the rub.
Pheidippides, my sweet one

Ph. Well, my father

S. Shake hands, Pheidippides, shake hands and kiss me.

Ph. There. What's the matter

S. Dost thou love me boy?

Ph. Ay by Poseidon there the God of horses.

S. No, no, not that: miss out the God of horses,
That God's the origin of all my evils.
But if you love me from your heart and soul,
My son, obey me.

Ph. Very well: what in?

S. Strip with all speed, strip off your present habits,
And go and learn what I'll advise you to.

Ph. Name your commands.

S. Will you obey?

Ph. I will,
By Dionysus!

S. Well then, look this way.
See you that wicket and the lodge beyond?

Ph. I see: and prithee what is that, my father?

S. That is the thinking-house of sapient souls.
There dwell the men who teach—aye, who persuade us,
That Heaven is one vast fire-extinguisher
Placed round about us, and that we're the cinders.
Aye, and they'll teach (only they'll want some money)
How one may speak and conquer, right or wrong.

Ph. Come, tell their names.

S. Well, I can't quite remember.
But they're deep thinkers, and true gentlemen.

Ph. Out on the rogues! I know them. Those rank pedants,
Those palefaced, barefoot vagabonds you mean:
That Socrates, poor wretch, and Chaerephon.

S. Oh! Oh! hush! hush! don't use those foolish words:
But if the sorrows of my barley touch you,
Enter their School and cut the Turf for ever.

Ph. I wouldn't go, so help me Dionysus,
For all Leogoras's breed of Phasians!

S. Go, I beseech you, dearest, dearest son,
Go and be taught.

Ph. And what would you have me learn?

S. 'Tis known that in their School they keep two Logics,
The Worse, Zeus save the mark, the Worse and Better.
This second Logic then, I mean the Worse one,
They teach to talk unjustly and—prevail.
Think then, you only learn that Unjust Logic,
And all the debts in which I have incurred through you,
I'll never pay, no, not one farthing of them.

Ph. I will not go. How could I face the knights
With all my colour worn and torn away!

S. O! then, by Earth, you have eat your last of mine,
You, and your coach-horse, and your sigma-brand:
Out with you! Go to the crows, for all I care.

Ph. But uncle Megacles won't leave me long
Without a horse: I'll go to him: good-bye. Exit

STREPSIADES *crosses to the Phrontisterion.*

S. I'm thrown, by Zeus, but I won't long lie prostrate.
I'll pray the Gods and send myself to school:
I'll go at once and try their thinking-house.
Stay: how can I, forgetful, slow, old fool,
Learn the nice hair-splittings of subtle Logic?
Well, go I must. 'Twont do to linger here.
Come on, I'll knock the door. Boy! Ho there, boy!

S. *within* (*within*) O hang it all! who's knocking at the door?

St. Me! Pheidon's son: Strepsiades of Cicynna.

Stu. Why, what a clown you are! to kick our door,
In such a thoughtless, inconsiderate way!
You've made my cogitation to miscarry.

S. Forgive me: I'm an awkward country fool.
But tell me, what was that I made miscarry?

Stu. 'Tis not allowed: Students alone may hear.

St. O that's all right: you may tell me: I'm come
To be a student in your thinking-house.

S. Come then. But they're high mysteries, remember.
'Twas Socrates was asking Chaerephon,
How many feet of its own a flea could jump.
For one first bit the brow of Chaerephon,
Then bounded off to Socrates's head.

St. How did he measure this?

S. Most cleverly.
He warmed some wax, and then he caught the flea,
And dipped its feet into the wax he'd melted:
Then let it cool, and there were Persian slippers!
These he took off, and so he found the distance.

S. O Zeus and king, what subtle intellects!

Stu. What would you say then if you heard another,
Our Master's own?

St. O come, do tell me that.

St. Why, Chaerephon was asking him in turn,
Which theory did he sanction; that the gnats
Hummed through their mouth, or backwards, through the tail.

S. Ay, and what said your Master of the gnat?

S. He answered thus: the entrail of the gnat
Is small: and through this narrow pipe the wind
Rushes with violence straight toward the tail;
There, close against the pipe, the hollow rump
Receives the wind, and whistles *to the blast.*

St. So then the rump is trumpet to the gnats!
O happy, happy in your entrail-learning!
Full surely need he fear nor debts nor duns,
Who knows about the entrails of the gnats.

Stu. And yet last night a mighty thought we lost
Through a green lizard.

S. Tell me, how was that?

Stu Why as Himself with eyes and mouth wide open
Mused on the moon her paths and revolutions
A lizard from the roof squirted full on him
St He he he he I like the lizard s spattering Socrates
Stu Then yesterday poor we we d got no dinner
St Hah! what did he devise to do for barley?
Stu He sprinkled on the table—some fine ash—
He bent a spit—he grasped it compass wise—
And—filched a mantle from the Wrestling School
St Good heavens! Why Thales was a fool to this!
O open open wide the study door
And show me show me show me Socrates
I die to be a student Open open![1]
O Heracles what kind of beasts are these!
Stu Why what s the matter? what do you think they re like?
St Like? why those Spartans whom we brought from Pylus
What makes them fix their eyes so on the ground?
Stu They seek things underground
St O! to be sure
Truffles! You there don t trouble about that!
I ll tell you where the best and finest grow
Look! why do those stoop down so very much?
Stu They re diving deep into the deepest secrets
St Then why s their rump turned up towards the sky?
Stu It s taking private lessons on the stars
(to the other Students)
Come come get in he ll catch us presently
St Not yet! not yet! just let them stop one moment
While I impart a little matter to them
Stu *No no they must go in it would never do*
To expose them elves too long to the open air
St O! by the Gods now what are these? do tell me.
Stu This is Astronomy
St And what is this?
Stu Geometry
St Well what s the use of that?
Stu To mete out lands
St What for allotment grounds?
Stu No but all lands
St *A choice idea truly*
Then every man may take his choice you mean
Stu Look here s a chart of the whole world Do you see?
This city s Athens
St Athens? I like that
I see no dicasts sitting That s not Athens
Stu In very truth this is the Attic ground
St And wh re then are my townsmen of Cicynna?
Stu Why thereabouts and here you see Euboea
Here reaching out a long way by the shore

St Yes overreached by us and Pericles
But now where s Sparta?
Stu Let me see O here
St *Heavens! how near us O do please manage this*
To shove her off from us, a long way further
Stu We can t do that by Zeus
St The worse for you
Hallo! who s that? that fellow in the basket?
Stu That s *he*
St Who s *he*?
Stu Socrates
St Socrates!
You sir call out to him as loud as you can
Stu Call him yourself I have not leisure now
The machine swings SOCRATES IN
St Socrates! Socrates!
Sweet Socrates!
Socrates Mortal! why call st thou me?
St *O first of all please tell me what you are doing*
So I walk on air and contem plate the Sun
St O then from a basket you contemn the Gods
And not from the earth at any rate?
So Most true
I could not have searched out celestial matters
Without suspending judgement and infusing
My subtle spirit with the kindred air
If from the ground I were to seek these things
I could not find so surely doth the earth
Draw to herself the essence of our thought
The same too is the case with water cress
St Hillo! what s that?
Thought draws the essence into water cress?
Come down sweet Socrates more near my level
And teach the lessons which I come to learn
So *(descending)* And wherefore art thou come?
St To learn to speak
For owing to my horrid debts and duns
My goods are seized I m robbed and mobbed and plundered
So How did you get involved with your eyes open?
St A galloping consumption seized my money
Come now do let me learn the unjust Logic
That can shirk debts now do just let me learn it
Name your own price by all the Gods I ll pay it
So The Gods! why you must know the Gods with us
Don t pass for current coin
St Eh? what do you use then?
Have you got iron as the Byzantines have?
So Come would you like to learn celestial matters,
How their truth stands?
St Yes if there s any truth
So And to hold intercourse with yon bright Clouds
Our virgin Goddesses?
St Yes that I should
So Then sit you down upon that sacred bed
St Well I am sitting

[1] The entire front of the house swheeled round exposing the inner court of the Phrontisterion Rogers.

So. Here then, take th s chaplet.
S. Chaplet? why? wh ? now never Socrates
Don't sacrifice poor m lik Athamas.
So. Fear not: our entrance serv ces requi e
All to do this.
St. But what am I to gain?
So. You'll be the flower of talkers, prattlers, gossips
On k ep quiet
St. Zeus! your words com true!
I shall be flour ered with all this peppering
So. Old man sit you ull and attend to my will, and hearken n peace to m praye
O Master and King holdin earth in ou sw g
O measureless infinite Air
And thou glowing Ether and Clouds wh o en wreathe her
with thunder and li htnin , and storms.
Arise and hav bright Ladies Di e
to our s udent in bod ly forms.
S. No, but stay no, but tay just one moment I pray
while my loak round m temples I wrap
To think that I' e come stupid fool from my home,
w th ne er a wat rproof cap!
So. Come forth, c me forth, dread Clouds, and to earth
our glorious majesty show
W ether lightly e rest on the tim ho oured rest
f Ol mpu en roned i snow
Or tread th soft dance mid the statel e pans,
of Ocean th nymphs to beguile
Or stoop to enfold w th our pitchers of gold
the m t cal wa es of the N e
Or around the white foam f Maeotis ye roam,
or Mima all w t r nd bare
O hear wh w pra nd turn not wa
from the rites which ou serv ts pr pare
CHO S O LOUD *appears*
Chorus. Clouds of all hu
R se we aloft w th our garments of dew
Come from old Ocea s unchan eable bed
Com ... ... summits we tread
Come t the peaks w h ther landscapes u ... ld
Gaze on th Earth h h harvest of gold
Gaze on th ... majest ... g
Gaz on th lord ... Sc
Come for th F ... Ether ... ...
... ... fla hing ... ... free.
Let ... shak ff this close-cl ... g dew
From our members eternall new
And sail upwards th w d ... orld to view
Come w Com wa
So. O Goddesses mi g t Cloud and d e
e ha heeded nd a swered m prayer
Hea d ye their sound nd th thunder around
as t thrilled th ough th t mulous air
St. Yes by Zeus, nd I hak nd I m afraid of a quak
nd I fear I m st sound a epl
Their thunders ha e made m soul so afraid
and those terribl voices so nigh
So I awful or not I must run to a pot
by Zeus, if I stop I shall d e.
So. Don t act in our schools like those Comedy fool
with their scurrilous scandalous ways.
Deep silence be thine while this Clu ter divine
their soul st rrin melody raise.
Ch. Come then with me
Dau hters of Mist to the land of the free
Come to the people whom Pallas hath blest
Come to the soil where the M teries rest
Com wh re the glorified Temple in ites
Th pure to partake of its myst cal rites
Hol the g fts that are b ought to the Gods,
Shrines with festoons and with garlands are crowned,
Pil rims resort to the sacred abodes,
Go geous the festi als all th ear round
And the Bromian rejoicings in Spring
When the fl tes with their deep music rin
And the sweetl t ed Choruses sing
Com way! Come w !
St. O Socrates pra by all the Gods, say
for I earnestl lon to be told
Wh o are these that reci e with such grandeur and might?
are they glorified mortals of old?
So. No mortals ar there but Clouds of the a r
great Gods who the indolent fill
Thes grant us discourse, and logical force
and the art of persuasion instil
A d periphrasis stra ge, and a po e to arra e,
and a marvellou jud ement and skill.
S. So then when I heard their omnipotent wo d
my pirit felt all of a fl tter
And t yearns to be in subtl cobwebs t spin
and about metaphysics to stutter
And together to glue a idea or two,
and battle away in r plies
So if t not wron I earnestly lon
to behold them m self with my e es.
So. Look up in he air towards Parnes out the e
for I see they will pit h bef lon
These egions about
St. Whe e? point m them out
So. They are driftin an infinite thron
And their lon had ws quake o e vall s and b ake
St. Wh what er s the matter to-da ?
I ca t see I declar
So. By the Entrance look there!
St. Ah I just got a glimpse by the way
So. There now ou must see how espl ndent they be
o your e es mu t be pumpk ns, I vow
St. Ah I see them proceed I should think so indeed
g eat pow rs! th y fill every thin now
So. So then till thi da that celestials were they
you ne e imagi ed or knew?

St Why no on my word for I always had heard
they were nothing but vapour and dew
So O then I declare you can t be aware
that tis these who the sophists protect
Prophets sent beyond sea quacks of every degree
fops signet and jewel bedecked
Astrological knaves and fools who their staves
of dithyrambs proudly rehearse—
Tis the Clouds who all these support at their ease
because they exalt them in verse
St Tis for this then they write of the on
rushin might
o the light stappin rain-drappin Cloud
And the thousand black curls whilk the Tempest
lord whirls
and the thunder blast stormy an loud
And birds o the sky floatin upwards on high
and air water leddies which droon
Wi their saft falling dew the gran Ether sae blue
and then in return they gulp doon
Huge gobbets o fishes an bountifu dishes
o mavises prime in their season
So And is it not right such praise to requite?
St Ah but tell me then what is the reason
That if as you say they are Clouds they to day
as women appear to our view?
For the ones in the air are not women I swear
So Why what do they seem then to you?
St I can t say very well but they straggle and swell
like fleeces spread out in the air
Not like women they flit no by Zeus not a bit
but these have got noses to wear
So Well now then attend to this question my
friend
St Look sharp and propound it to me
So Didst thou never espy a Cloud in the sky
which a centaur or leopard might be
Or a wolf or a cow?
St *Very often I vow*
and show me the cause I entreat
So Why I tell you that these become just what
they please
and whenever they happen to meet
One shaggy and wild like the tangle haired child
of old Xenophantes their rule
Is at once to appear like Centaurs to jeer
the ridiculous look of the fool
St What then do they do if Simon they view
that fraudulent harpy to shame?
So Why his nature to show to us mortals below
a wolfish appearance they frame
St O they then I ween having yesterday seen
Cleonymus quaking with fear
(Him who threw off his shield as he fled from the
field)
metamorphosed themselves into deer
So Yes and now they espy soft Cleisthenes nigh
and therefore as women appear
St O then without fail All hail! and All hail!
my welcome receive and reply
With your voices so fine so grand and divine
majestical Queens of the Sky!

Ch Our welcome to thee old man who wouldst
see
the marvels that science can show
And thou the high priest of this subtlety feast
say what would you have us bestow?
Since there is not a sage for whom we d engage
our wonders more freely to do,
Except it may be for Prodicus he
for his knowledge may claim them but you
For that sideways you throw your eyes as you go
and are all affectation and fuss
No shoes will you wear but assume the grand air
on the strength of your dealings with us.
St O Earth! what a sound how august and
profound!
it fills me with wonder and awe.
So These these then alone, for true Deities own
the rest are all Godships of straw
St Let Zeus be left out He s a God beyond
doubt
come that you can scarcely deny
So *Zeus indeed! there s no Zeus don t you be*
so obtuse
St No Zeus up aloft in the sky!
Then you first must explain who it is sends the
rain
or I really must think you are wron
So Well then be it known these send it alone
I can prove it by arguments stron
Was there ever a shower seen to fall in an hour
when the sky was all cloudless and blue?
Yet on a fine day when the Clouds are away
he might send one according to you
St Well it must be confessed that chimes in
with the rest
your words I am forced to believe
Yet before I had dreamed that the rain water
streamed
from Zeus and his chamber pot sieve
But whence then my friend does the thunder
descend?
that does make me quake with affright!
So Why tis they I declare as they roll through
the air
St *What the Clouds? did I hear you aright?*
So Ay for when to the brim filled with water
they swim
by Necessity carried along
They are hung up on high in the vault of the sky
and so by Necessity stron
In the midst of their course they clash with great
force
and thunder away without end
St But is it not He who compels this to be?
does not Zeus this Necessity send?
So No Zeus have we there but a Vortex of air
St *What! Vortex? that s something I own*
I knew not before that Zeus was no more
but Vortex was placed on his throne!
But I have not yet heard to what cause you
referred
the thunder s majestical roar

So Yes, tis they when on high full of water they fly
and then, as I told you before,
By Compression impelled as they clash, are compelled
a terrible clatter to make.
St Come how can that be? I really don t see.
So Yourself as my proof I will take.
Have you ever then eat the broth puddings you get
when the Panathenaea comes round
And felt with what might your bowels all night
in turbulent tumult resound
St By Apollo, tis true, there s a mighty to-do,
and my belly keeps rumbling about
And the puddings begin to clatter within
and kick up a wonderful rout
Quite gently at first papapax, papapax,
but soon pappapappax away
Till at last, I'll be bound I can thunder as loud
papapappappapappax, as They
So Shalt thou then a sound so loud and profound
from thy belly diminutive send,
And shall not the high and the infinite Sky
go thundering on without end?
For both, you will find, on an impulse of wind
and similar causes depend
St Well, but tell me from Whom comes the bolt
through the gloom,
with its awful and terrible flashes
And wherever it turns, some it singes and burns,
and some it reduces to ashes!
For this tis quite plain, let who will send the rain
that Zeus at the perjurers dashes.
So And how you old fool of a dark ages school,
and an antediluvian wit
If the perjured they strike and not all men alike,
have they never Cleon must hit?
Then of Simon again, and Theorus plain
known perjurers, yet they escape
But he smites his own shrine with his arrows
divine
and Sunium Attica s cape
And the ancient gnarled oaks now what prompted
those strokes? They never forswore I should
say
St Can t say that they do your word appear
true,
Whence comes then the thunderbolt pray?
So When a wind that is dry being lifted on high
is suddenly pent into these
[illegible] their skin, like a bladder within,
by Necessity s changeless decrees
[illegible] compressed [illegible] it bursts them outright
[illegible] with an impulse so strong
That at last by the force and the swing of its course,
it takes fire and whizzes along
St That exactly the thing that I suffered one
Spring
at the great feast of Zeus, I admit
I d a paunch in the pot, but I wholly forgot
about making that slit
So it spluttered and swelled while the saucepan I
held,
till at last with a vengeance it flew
Took me quite by surprise, dung bespattered my
eyes,
and scalded my face black and blue!
Ch O thou who wouldst fain great wisdom attain,
and comest to us in thy need
All Hellas around shall thy glory resound
such a prosperous life thou shalt lead
So thou art but endued with a memory good
and accustomed profoundly to think
And thy soul wilt inure all wants to endure
and from no undertaking to shrink,
And art hard and bold to bear up against cold
and with patience a supper thou losest
Nor too much dost incline to gymnastics and wine
but all lusts of the body refusest
And esteemest it best what is always the test
of a truly intelligent brain
To prevail and succeed whensoever you plead
and hosts of tongue-conquests to gain
St But as far as a sturdy soul is concerned
and a horrible restless care
And a belly that pines and wears away
on the wretchedest frugalest fare
You may hammer and strike as long as you like
I am quite invincible there.
So Now then you agree in rejecting with me
the Gods you believed in when young
And my creed you ll embrace I believe in wide
space,
in the Clouds, in the eloquent Tongue.
St If I happened to meet other Gods in the
street,
I'd show the cold shoulder I vow
No libation I'll pour not one victim more
on their altars I'll sacrifice now
Ch Now be honest and true and say what we
shall do
since you never shall fail of our aid
If you hold us most dear in devotion and fear
and will ply the philosopher s trade.
St O Ladies Divine, small ambition is mine
I only most modestly seek,
Out and out for the rest of my life to be best
of the children of Hellas to speak.
Ch Say no more of your care, we have granted
your prayer
and know from this moment that none
More acts shall pass through in the People than you
such favour from us you have won
St Not acts, if you please I want nothing of
these
this gift you may quickly withdraw
But I wish to succeed just enough for my need
and to slip through the clutches of law
Ch This then you shall do, for your wishes are
few
not many nor great your demands,
So away with all care from henceforth and prepare
to be placed in our votaries hands.

St Why no on my word for I always had heard
they were nothing but vapour and dew
So O then I declare you can t be aware
that tis these who the sophists protect
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or I really must think you are wrong
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when the sky was all cloudless and blue?
Yet on a fine day when the Clouds are away
he might send one according to you
St Well it must be confessed that chimes in with the rest
your words I am forced to believe
Yet before I had dreamed that the rain water streamed
from Zeus and his chamber pot sieve
But whence then my friend does the thunder descend?
that does make me quake with affright!
So Why tis they I declare as they roll through the air
St What the Clouds? did I hear you aright?
So Ay for when to the brim filled with water they swim
by Necessity carried along
They are hung up on high in the vault of the sky
and so by Necessity stron
In the midst of their course they clash with great force
and thunder away without end
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and then, as I told you before,
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And felt with what might your bowels all night
in turbulent tumult resound?
St. By Apollo, 'tis true, there's a mighty to-do,
and my belly keeps rumbling about;
And the puddings begin to clatter within
and kick up a wonderful rout:
Quite gently at first, papapax, papapax,
but soon pappapappax away,
Till at last, I'll be bound, I can thunder as loud,
papapappappapappax, as They.
So. Shalt thou then a sound so loud and profound
from thy belly diminutive send,
And shall not the high and the infinite Sky
go thundering on without end?
For both, you will find, on an impulse of wind
and *similar causes* depend.
St. Well, but tell me from Whom comes the bolt through the gloom,
with its awful and terrible flashes;
And wherever it turns, some it scorches and burns,
and some it reduces to ashes!
For this 'tis quite plain, let who will send the rain,
that Zeus against perjurers dashes.
So. And how, you old fool of a dark-ages school,
and an antediluvian wit,
If the perjured they strike, and not all men alike,
have they never Cleonymus hit?
Then of Simon again, and Theorus, its plain,
known perjurers, yet they escape.
But he smites his own shrine with his arrows divine,
and "Sunium, Attica's cape,"
And the ancient gnarled oaks: now what prompted those strokes? *They never forswore I should say.*
St. Can't say that they do: your words appear true.
Whence comes then the thunderbolt, pray?
So. When a wind that is dry, being lifted on high,
is suddenly pent into these,
It swells up their skin like a bladder within,
by Necessity's changeless decrees:
Till compressed very tight, it bursts them outright,
and away with an impulse so strong,
That at last by the force and the swing of its course,
it takes fire as it whizzes along.
St. That's exactly the thing that I suffered one Spring,
at the great feast of Zeus, I admit:
I'd a paunch in the pot, but I wholly forgot
about making the safety-valve slit.
So it spluttered and swelled, while the saucepan I held,
till at last with a vengeance it flew:
Took me quite by surprise, dung-bespattered my eyes,
and scalded my face black and blue!
Ch. O thou who wouldst fain great wisdom attain,
and comest to us in thy need,
All Hellas around shall thy glory resound,
such a prosperous life thou shalt lead:
So thou art but endued with a memory good,
and accustomed profoundly to think,
And thy soul wilt inure all wants to endure,
and from no undertaking to shrink,
And art hardy and bold, to bear up against cold,
and with patience a supper thou losest:
Nor too much dost incline to gymnastics and wine,
but all lusts of the body refusest:
And esteemest it best, what is always the test
of a truly intelligent brain,
To prevail and succeed whensoever you plead,
and hosts of tongue-conquests to gain.
St. But as far as a sturdy soul is concerned
and a horrible restless care,
And a belly that pines and wears away
on the wretchedest frugalest fare,
You may hammer and strike as long as you like;
I am quite invincible there.
So. Now then you agree in rejecting with me
the Gods you believed in when young,
And *my* creed you'll embrace "I believe in wide Space,
in the Clouds, in the eloquent Tongue."
St. If I happened to meet other Gods in the street,
I'd show the cold shoulder, I vow.
No libation I'll pour: not one victim more
on their altars I'll sacrifice now.
Ch. Now be honest and true, and say what we shall do:
since you never shall fail of our aid,
If you hold us most dear in devotion and fear,
and will ply the philosopher's trade.
St. O Ladies Divine, small *ambition is mine*:
I only most modestly seek,
Out and out for the rest of my life to be best
of the children of Hellas to speak.
Ch. Say no more of your care, we have granted your prayer:
and know from this moment, that none
More acts shall pass through in the People than you:
such favour from us you have won.
St. Not acts, if you please: I want nothing of these:
this gift you may quickly withdraw;
But I wish to succeed, just enough for my need,
and to slip through the clutches of law.
Ch. This then you shall do, for your wishes are few:
not many nor great your demands,
So away with all care from henceforth, and prepare
to be placed in our votaries' hands.

St Why no on my word for I always had heard
they were *nothing but vapour and dew*
So O then I declare you can t be aware
that tis these who the sophists protect
Prophets sent beyond sea quacks of every degree
fops signet and jewel bedecked
Astrological knaves and fools *who their staves*
of dithyrambs proudly rehearse—
Tis the Clouds who all these support at their ease
because they exalt them in verse
St Tis for this then they write of the on
rushin might
o the light stappin rain drappin Cloud
And the thousand black curls whilk the Tempest
lord whirls
and the thunder blast stormy an loud
And birds o the sky floatin upwards on high
and air water leddies which droon
Wi their saft falling dew the gran Ether sae blue
and then in return they gulp doon
Huge gobbets o fishes an bountifu dishes
o mavises prime in their season
So And is it not right such praise to requite?
St Ah but tell me then what is the reason
That if as you say they are Clouds they to day
as women appear to our view?
For the ones in the air are not women I swear
So Why what do they seem then to you?
St I can t say very well but they straggle and swell
like fleeces spread out in the air
Not like women they flit no by Zeus not a bit
but these have got noses to wear
So Well now then attend to this question my
friend
St Look sharp and propound it to me
So Didst thou never espy a Cloud in the sky
which a centaur or leopard might be
Or a wolf or a cow?
St Very often I vow
and show me the cause I entreat
So Why I tell you that these become just what
they please
and whenever they happen to meet
One shaggy and wild like the tangle haired child
of old Xenophantes their rule
Is at once to appear like Centaurs to jeer
the ridiculous look of the fool
St What then do they do if *Simon* they view
that fraudulent harpy to shame?
So Why his nature to show to us mortals below
a wolfish appearance they frame
St O they then I ween having yesterday seen
Cleonymus quaking with fear
(Him who threw off his shield as he fled from the
field)
m tamorphosed themselves into deer
So Yes and now they espy soft Cleisthenes nigh
and therefore as women appear
St O then without fail All hail! and All hail!
my welcome receive and reply
With your voices so fine so grand and divine
majestical Queens of the Sky!

Ch Our welcome to thee old man who wouldst
see
the marvels that science can show
And thou the high priest of this subtlety feast
say what would you have us bestow?
Since there is not a sage for whom we d enga e
our wonders more freely to do,
Except it may be for Prodicus he
for his knowledge may claim them but you
For that sideways you throw your eyes as you go
and are all affectation and fuss
No shoes will you wear but assume the grand air
on the strength of your dealings with us
St O Earth! what a sound how august and
profound!
it fills me with wonder and awe
So *These these then alone for true Deities own*
the rest are all Godships of straw
St Let Zeus be left out He s a God beyond
doubt
come that you can scarcely deny
So *Zeus indeed! there s no Zeus don t you be*
so obtuse
St No Zeus up aloft in the sky!
Then you first must explain who it is sends the
rain
or I really must think you are wrong
So Well then be it known these send it alone
I can prove it by arguments strong
Was there ever a shower seen to fall in an hour
when the sky was all cloudless and blue?
Yet on a fine day when the Clouds are away
he might send one according to you
St Well it must be confessed that chimes in
with the rest
your words I am forced to believe
Yet before I had dreamed that the rain water
streamed
from Zeus and his chamber pot sieve
But whence then my friend does the thunder
descend?
that does make me quake with affright!
So Why tis they I declare as they *roll* through
the air
St What the Clouds? did I hear you aright?
So Ay for when to the brim filled with water
they swim
by Necessity carried along
They are hung up on high in the vault of the sky
and so by Necessity strong
In the midst of their course they clash with great
force
and thunder away without end
St But is it not He who compels this to be?
does not Zeus this Necessity send?
So No Zeus have we there but a Vortex of air
St What! Vortex? that s something I own
I knew not before that Zeus was no more
but Vortex was placed on his throne!
But I have not yet heard to what cause you
referred
the thunder s majestical roar

Yet th clever ones amongst you
e en now I won t betray
\ fore er since from judges
unt whom tis joy to speak,
Brothers Profligate and Modest
gained the praise we fondly seek
When for I was yet a Virg
and it was not right to bear
I exposed it and A ther
d d the foundl nurse with care
B t twas e who n bl nurtured
ye who brou ht it up with skill
From that hour I proudl herish
pled es of your sure good will
Now then comes it sister hith r
like Electra in the Play
Comes in earnest expectation
kindred m nds to meet to-day
Sh will recogniz full surely
f sh find her brother s tress.
And bserve how pure h r morals
wh to notice h r first d ess,
Enters not w th filthy s mbols
on h r modest garme ts hung
Jeerin bald heads, dancing ball ts,
for th l ughter of the young
In this play no ret hed gre beard
w th a taff h fellow pokes,
So bscurin from the aud e ce
all the poorness of h s jokes.
No one rushes n with t rches,
o on groans, Oh dear! Oh dear!'
Trusting in t genuin ments
omes thi pl y before you here
Y t, thou h uch h ro-poet
I th bald head d not grow
Ca h tin let neith d I
twic thric my p eces show
Alwa fresh idea parkl
alwa no l jests del ght
Nothi g l k each th r sa that
ll a e most ceed n bri ht
I am h wh floored the giant
Cleon, n his hour of p de
Y t when d wn l sc ned tnk h m
nd I l ft h m whe h d ed!
B t th th rs, whe handle
o e H pe bol did lend
Trampl down the w t hed ca t ff
nd hi mothe without end
I his Maricas th Drunka d
E poli th cha ge began,
Sham fully my Kn ht dist rt ng
h is a ham ful man
T ki g on h tipsy beldam
j t th ballet-da t keep
Phryni hus prim t ent on,
eat b monst rs of th deep
Then Hermippus on th ca ff
pened all hi l ttl skill,
And th est upon the ca t ff
are their wit xhausti g till
A d my simile to pilfer
of the Eels they all combine
Whoso laughs at their producti ns,
let h m not delight in mine
But f r you who pr ise my gen us,
you who th nk my writings cle er
Ye shall ga n a name for wisd m
yea! fore er and forever

O m hty God O hea enly King
F rst unto Thee my prayer I brin
O come Lord Zeus, to my choral so g —
A d Thou d ead Power whose res tles hand
Hea es up the sea and the trembl land
Lo d of the trident stern and stron —
And Thou who u t t est the l fe of u all
Come F ther our pa ent O come to my call —
And Thou wh flondest the world with l ght
Gu d g thy steed th o gh the gl tteri g sky
To men below and to Gods on h gh
A P tentate hea enly bri ht!

O most sapient wise spectators,
hither turn attent on due
We ompla n of sad ill treatment
we e a bone to pick with you
We have e er helped your city
helped with all our m ght and main
Yet you pay us no devotion
that is why we now complain
We wh always watch around you
For f any project seems
Ill-concocted then w th nder
then the rain comes down in streams.
And remember v ry lat l
how we knit our brows together
Thunders crashi g lightn ngs fla h ng
n er was such awful weather
And the Moon n ha t ecl psed h r
nd th Sun in anger swore
H would cu l his wick with n h m
and gi light to you no more
Should you choose that mischief worker
Cleon whom the Gods abhor
T n er Sla e nd Paphl onian
to lead out you hosts to war
Yet ou chose him! et you chose h m!
For they say that Folly grows
Best and finest i this city
b t th gracious God dispose
Always all things for the better
causing errors to succeed
And how thi sad job may p fit
su el he who runs may read.
Let the Cormora t be o icted
in command of bribes and th ft
Let us ha e him gag ed nd muzzled
n the pillory chained and l ft
Then again, in ancient fashion,
all that ye have er ed of late
Will turn out your own ad ant ge
and blessing to the Stat

St This then will I do confiding in you
for Necessity presses me sore
And so sad is my life twixt my cobs and my wife
that I cannot put up with it more.
So now at your word I give and afford
My body to these to treat as th y please
To have and to hold in squalor in cold
In hunger and thirst yea by Zeus at the worst
To be flayed out of shape from my heels to my nape
So along with my hide from my duns I escape
And to men may appear without conscience or fear
Bold hasty and wise a concocter of lies
A rattler to speak a dodger a sneak
A regular claw of the tables of law
A shuffler complete well worn in deceit
A supple unprincipled troublesome cheat
A hang dog accurst a bore with the worst
In the tricks of the jury courts thoroughly versed
If all that I meet this praise shall repeat
Work away as you choose I will nothing refuse
Without any reserve from my head to my shoes
You shan t see me wince though my gutlets you mince
And these entrails of mine for a sausage combine
Served up for the gentlemen students to dine

Ch Here s a spirit bold and high
Ready armed for any strife
(*to* STREPSIADES)
If you learn what I can teach
Of the mysteries of speech
Your glory soon shall reach To the summit of the sky

St And what am I to gain?

Ch With the Clouds you will obtain
The most happy the most enviable life

St Is it possible for me Such felicity to see?

Ch Yes and men shall come and wait
In their thousands at your gate
Desiring consultations and advice
On an action or a pleading
From the man of light and leading
And you ll pocket many talents in a trice
(*to* SOCRATES)
Here take the old man and do all that you can
your new fashioned thoughts to instil
And stir up his mind with your notions refined
and test him with judgement and skill

So Come now you tell me something of your habits
For if I don t know them I can t determine
What engines I must bring to bear upon you

St Eh! what? Not going to storm me by the Gods?

So No no I want to ask you a few questions
First is your memory good?

St Two ways by Zeus
If I m owed anything I m mindful very
But if I owe (*Oh dear!*) *forgetful very*

So Well then have you the gift of speaking in you?

St The gift of speaking no of cheatin yes

So No? ho then can you learn?

St Oh well enou h

So Then wh n I throw you out some clever notion
About the laws of nature you must catch it.

St What! must I snap up sapience in dog fashion?

So Oh! why the man s an ignorant old savage
I fear my friend that you ll require the whip
Come if one strikes you what do you do?

St I m struck
Then in a little while I call my witness
Then in another little while I summon him

So Put off your cloak

St Why what have I done wro g?

So O nothing nothing all go in here naked

St Well but I have not come with a search warrant

So Fool! throw it off

St Well tell me this one th n
If I m extremely careful and attentive
Which of your students shall I most resemble?

So Why Chaerephon You ll be his very im e

St What! I shall be half dead! O luckless me!

So Don t chatter there but come and follow m
Make haste now quicker here

St Oh but do first
Give me a honied cake Zeus! how I tremble
To go down there as if to see Trophonius

So Go on! why keep you pottering round the door?

SOCRATES and STREPSIADES en er the Phrontisterion

Chorus

Yes! go and farewell as your courage is great
So bright be your fate
May all good fortune his steps pursue
Who now in his life s dim twilight haze,
Is game such venturesome things to do
To steep his mind in discoveries new
To walk, a novice in wisdom s ways

O Spectators I will utter
honest truths with accents free
Yea! by mighty Dionysus
Him who bred and nurtured me
So may I be deemed a poet
and this day obtain the prize
As till that unhappy blunder
I had always held you wise
And of all my plays esteeming
this the wisest and the best
Served it up for your enjoyment
which had more than all the rest
Cost me thought and time and labour
then most scandalously treated
I retired in mighty dudgeon
by unworthy foes defeated
This is why I blame your critics
for whose sak I framed the play

Eh! what? !!

S Ah, but Cleonymus has got no trough,
His bread is k..eaded in a rounded mortar
St ..hat must I say in f..ture?
So What! why call it
A "troughess, female," just as one says "an actress."
St A "troughess, female?"
So That's the way to call it.
St O "troughess" then and Miss Cleonymus.
So Still you must learn some more about these names
Wh..h are the names of men and which of women.
St Oh, I know which are women.
So Well repeat some
St Demetria, Cleitagora, Philinna.
So Now tell me some men's names.
St O yes, ten thousand
Philon, Melesias, Amynias.
So Hold! I said men's names: these are women's ..ames.
St No, no, they're men's.
So They are not men's, for how
Would you address Amynias if you m..t him?
St How? somehow thus. He.e here Amynia!
So Amynia! a woman's name, you see.
St And rightly too; a sneak who shirks all service!
B..t all know this: let's pass t.. something else.
So Well, then, you get int.. the bed
St And then?
So Excogitate about your own affairs.
St ..ot there I do beseech, not the .. at least
Let me excogitat.. on the ba.. ground
So There is no way but this.
St O luckless me!
How I shall suffer from the bugs to-da..
So Now then survey in e.. ery wa..
with airy jud.. ement sharp and quick
Wrapping thou..hts around you thick
And if so be in one you stick
..ever stop to toil and bother
Lightly, lightly, lightly leap,
T.. another ..t another
Far ..way be balm.. sleep
St Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! U..h! Ugh!
Ch What .. the ma..te.? where's th.. pai..?
St Friend! I'm d..ing. F..om the bed
O..t creep bu..bears scant.. fed.
And my ribs they bite in tw..in
And m.. lif.. blood ou.. they suck,
And m.. manhood off th.. pluck,
And m.. loins the.. di.. and drain,
And I m.. d..ing once ..gain.
Ch O tak.. not th.. ma..t..r so d.. ..ply to heart.
St Why what can I do
Vanished m.. ..kin so ruddy, of hue,
Vanished my lif.. blood, ..ni..hed m.. shoe,
Vanished my purse, ..nd what is still worse
As I hummed ..n ..ld tune till m.. wa..ch should be past
I had ..ery near ..anished myself ..t th.. last.
So Hallo there, are you ponderin..?
St Yes to be sure.
So And what have your ponderings come to?
St Whether these bugs will lea..e a bit of me
So Consume you, wretch!
St Faith I'm consumed already
So Come, come, don't flinch: pull up the clothes aga..n
Search out and catch some very subtle dodge
T.. fleece your cred..tors.
St O me, how can I
Fleece any one with all these fleeces on me?
(*Puts his head under the clothes*)
So Come, let me peep a moment what he's doing
Hey! he's asleep!
St No, no! no fear of that!
So Caught anything?
St No, nothing.
So Surely something
St Well I had something in m.. hand, I'll own.
So Pull up th.. clothes again, and go on ponder..it
St On what? now do please tell me, Socrates.
So What is it that you want? first tell me that.
St You ha..e heard a million t..mes what 'tis I want
My d..bts! m.. debts! I want to shirk my debts.
So Come, com.. pull up the clothes: refine your thoughts
W..th subtle wit: look at the case on all sides:
Mind ..ou d..vide correctly
St Ugh! O me.
So Hush: if you meet with any difficulty
Lea..e it a moment: then return again
T.. th.. same thought: then l..ft ..nd weigh it well.
St Oh, here, dear Socrates!
So Well, my old friend
St I'..e found a notion how t.. shirk my d..bts.
So Well then, propound it.
St What do you th..k of this?
Suppose I hire some grand Thessalian w..tch
To conjure down the Moon, and then I take it
And clap it into some round b..l..m..t box,
And keep it fast there, like a look..ng glass,—
So But what .. the use ..f that?
St The use, quotha:
Why, if the Moon should never rise ..gain,
I'd never pay one farthi..g
So No! why not?
St Why, don't we pay our interest by the month?
So Good! now I'll proffer you another problem.
Suppose an action: dama..es, fi..e talents:
Now t..ll m.. how you can evade that same.
St How! how! can't say at all: but I'll go seek.
So Don't wrap your mind for e..er round yourself,
B..t let your thoughts range freely throu..h the air
Lik.. chafers with .. thread about their feet
St I'..e found ..b..ght evasion of the ..ction
Confess yourself, 'tis ..lorious.
So But what is it?

Phoebus my King come to me still
Thou who boldest the Cynthian hill
The lofty peak of the Delian isle —
And Thou his sister to whom each day
Lydian maidens devoutly pray
In Thy stately gilded Ephesian pile —
And Athene our Lady the queen of us all
With the Aegis of God O come to my call —
And Thou whose dancing torches of pine
Flicker Parnassian glades along
Dionysus Star of Thy Maenad throng
Come Reveller most divine!

We when we had finished packing
and prepared our journey down
Met the Lady Moon who charged us
with a message for your town
First All hail to noble Athens
and her faithful true Allies
Then she said your shameful conduct
made her angry passions rise
Treating her so ill who always
aids you not in words but clearly
Saves you first of all in torchlight
every month a drachma nearly
So that each one says if business
calls him out from home by night
Buy no link my boy this evening
for the Moon will lend her light
Other blessings too she sends you
yet you will not mark your days
As she bids you but confuse them
jumbling them all sorts of ways
And she says the Gods in chorus
shower reproaches on her head
When in bitter disappointment
they go supperless to bed
Not obtaining festal banquets
duly on the festal day
Ye are badgering in the law courts
when ye should arise and slay!
And full oft when we celestials
some strict fast are duly keeping
For the fate of mighty Memnon
or divine Sarpedon weeping
Then you feast and pour libations
and Hyperbolus of late
Lost the crown he wore so proudly
as Recorder of the Gate
Through the wrath of us immortals
so perchance he ll rather know
Always all his days in future
by the Lady Moon to go

SOCRATES *here comes out of the Phrontisterion where he has been endeavouring to teach* STREPSIADES

So Never by Chaos Air and Respiration
Never no never have I seen a clown
So helpless and forgetful and absurd!
Why if he learns a quirk or two he clean
Forgets them ere he has learnt them all the same
I ll call him out of doors here to the light
Take up your bed Strepsiades, and come!

St By Zeus I can t the bugs make such resistance

So I ll be haste There throw it down and listen

St *(entering with bed)* Well!

So Attend to me what shall I teach you first
That you ve not learnt before? Which will you have
Measures or rhythms or the right use of words?

St Oh! measures to be sure for very lately
A grocer swindled me of full three pints

So I don t mean that but which do you like the best
Of all the measures six feet or eight feet?

St *Well I like nothing better than the yard*

So Fool! don t talk nonsense

St What will you bet me now
That two yards don t exactly make six feet?

So Consume you! what an ignorant clown you are!
Still perhaps you can learn tunes more easily

St But will tunes help me to repair my fortunes?

So They ll help you to behave in company
If you can tell which kind of tune is best
For the sword dance and which for finger music

St For fingers! aye but I know that

So Say on then

St What is it but this finger? though before
Ere this was grown I used to play with that

So Insufferable dolt!

St Well but you goose,
I don t want to learn this

So What *do* you want then?

St Teach me the Logic! teach me the unjust Logic!

So But you must learn some other matters first
As what are males among the quadrupeds

St I should be mad indeed not to know that
The Ram the Bull the Goat the Dog the Fowl

So *Ah! there you are! there s a mistake at once!*
You call the male and female fowl the same

St How! tell me how

So Why fowl and fowl of course

St That s true though! what then shall I say in future?

So Call one a fowless and the other a fowl

St *A fowless? Good! Bravo! Bravo! by Air*
Now for that one bright piece of information
I ll give you a barley bumper in your trough

So Look there a fresh mistake you called it trough
Masculine when it s feminine

St How pray?
How did I make it masculine?

So Why trough
Just like Cleonymus

St I don t quite catch it

So Why trough Cleonymus both masculine

S. And lots besides but e erythin, I learn
I straight forget I am so old and stupid
Ph. And this is what you ha e lost your mantle for?
St. It's ery absent sometimes t sn t lost
Ph. And what ha e you done with your shoes, you d tard you?
S. Like Pericles, all for the best I' e lost them.
Come, com go w th me humour me in th s,
And then d what you like Ah! I remember
How I t humour you, a coo ing baby
W h the first obol which my judgeship f tched me
Bou ht you go-cart at the great Diasia
Ph. The time will come when you 'll repent of this.
S. Good boy to obey me. H llo! Socrates.
Enter SOCR. TES.
Come here come here I've brought this son of mine,
T ou h, enou h, I'll warrant you.
S. Poor infant,
Not et aware of my suspension wonders.
Ph. You d make a wondrous piece of ware suspended
St. Hey! Han the la !! Do you abuse the Master?
So. And look, suthspended! In what foolish fashion
He mouthed the word with pout n lips agape.
How can *he* learn e ason of a suit
Tim l citation, damavin replies?
Hyperbolus, though, lea nt them fo a talent.
St. One er fea !h s ery sha p by nature.
For ben h was a little hap high,
He used to build small bab houses, boats,
Go-ca t f leath darlin little frogs
Carved from pomegranates, you can t think how nicely!
So now I pr thee teach him both your Logics,
Th Better ou call it nd the W rse
Wh h w th the worse cause can defeat th Bett r
Or if not both t all ent th Worse
So. Aye, with his own ears he shall hear th m argu
I sha t be ther
S. B t please emember this,
C him the kna k f easoning down ll Just ce.
Exit SOCR. TES
Enter RIGHT LOG *a d* WRONG OGIC.
Right Logic Com show yourself now
with your confident br w
—T the ta if ou dare!
Wro g Logic Lead on wh you please
I shall smas h with ease
If a aud enc be the e
R L. Y ll mash me, ou say! And who are yo pr
W L. A Logic lik you
R.L. But th Worst f the two
W L. Yet ou I can drub whom *my* Better they d b
R.L. By what ruse taught?
W.L. B ori inal thought
R L. A e truly your trade so succes ful is made
B means of these noodles of ours, I m afraid
W L. Not noodles, but wise
R.L. I ll smash you and your lies!
W L. By what method forsooth?
R L. By speak ng the Truth
W L. Your word I will meet a d ent rely defeat
There ne er *was* Justice or Truth I r peat
R.L. No Justice! you say?
W L. Well, where does it stay?
R.L. W th the Gods in th a
W L. If Just ce be there
How comes it that Zeus could his fath r reduce
Yet li e with th eir Godships unpun shed and loose?
R.L. Ugh! Ugh! These e ils com thick,
I feel awfully sick
A basin, quick quick!
W L. You re a useless old drone w th one foot in the grave!
R.L. You re a shameless, unpri c pled di solute knave!
W L. Hey! a ro y festoon.
R.L. A d a ulgar buffoon!
W L. What! Lilies from you?
R.L. And a parricide too!
W L. 'Tis with gold (you don t know it) you sprinkle my head
R.L. O gold s t now? but it used to be lead!
W L. But now it s a grace and a glory instead
R.L. You re a little too bold
W L. You re a good deal too old
R.L. 'Tis throug! you I well know not a stripling w ll go
To attend to the rules which are tau ht in the Schools
B t Athen one day shall be up to the fools
W L. How squalid your dress!
R L. Yours s fine I confess.
Y t of old I declare but a pa per you were
And pa sed yourself off ou co npassion to draw
As a Telephus, (Eur pidean)
W ll pleased from a begg ly wallet to gnaw
At maxit es Pand letean
W L. O me! for the wisd m you e mentioned in jest!
R L. O m ! for the folly f you and the rest
Who ou to destroy their children employ!
W L. *Him* you never shall tea h you are quite out of dat
R.L. If not he'll be lost as he ll find to his cost
T ught thing by you b t to chatter and prate.
W L. He ra es, s ou see let him be let him be.
R.L. Touch him if you dare! I bid you beware
Ch Forbear forbear to wrangle a d scold!
Each of you show
You what you taught their fathers of old
You let us know
Your s st m untried that hearing each side
From the lips of the Ri als the youth may decid
To which of your schools he will go.

St I say haven t you seen in druggists shops
That stone that splendidly transparent stone
By which they kindle fire?
So The burning glass?
St That s it well then I d get me one of these
And as the clerk was entering down my case
I d stand like this some distance towards the sun
And burn out every line
So By the Three Graces
A clever dodge!
St O me how pleased I am
To have a debt like that clean blotted out
So Come then make haste and snap up this
St Well what?
So How to prevent an adversary s suit
Supposing you were sure to lose it tell me
St O nothing easier
So How pray?
St *Why thus*
While there was yet one trial intervening
Ere mine was cited I d go hang myself
So Absurd!
St No by the Gods it isn t though
They could not prosecute me were I dead
So Nonsense! Be off I ll try no more to teach you
St Why not? do please now please do *Socrates*
So Why you forget all that you learn directly
Come say what you learnt first there s a chance for you
St Ah! what was first?—Dear me whatever was it?—
Whatever s that we knead the barley in?—
Bless us what was it?
So Be off and feed the crows
You most forgetful most absurd old dolt!
St O me! what will become of me poor wretch!
I m clean undone I haven t learnt to speak —
O gracious Clouds now do advise me something
Ch Our counsel ancient friend is simply this
To send your son if you have one at home
And let him learn this wisdom in your stead
St Yes! I ve a son quite a fine gentleman
But he won t learn so what am I to do?
Ch What! is he master?
St Well he s strong and vigorous
And he s got some of the Coesyra blood within him
Still I ll go for him and if he won t come
By all the Gods I ll turn him out of doors
Go in one moment I ll be back directly

SOCRATES *exits to Phrontisterion and* STREPSIADES *to his house*

Ch Dost thou not see how bounteous we our favours free
Will shower on you
Since whatsoe er your will prepare
This dupe will do
But now that you have dazzled and elated so your man
Make haste and seize whate er you please as quickly as you can
For cases such as these my friend are very prone to change and bend

Enter STREPSIADES *and* PHEIDIPPIDES

St Get out! you shan t stop here so help me Mist!
Be off and eat up Megacles columns
Ph How now my father? what s i the wind today?
You re wandering by Olympian Zeus you are
St Look there! Olympian Zeus! you blockhead you
Come to *your* age and yet believe in Zeus!
Ph Why prithee what s the joke?
St Tis so preposterous
When babes like you hold antiquated notions
But come and I ll impart a thing or two
A wrinkle making you a man indeed
But mind don t whisper this to any one
Ph Well what s the matter?
St Didn t you swear by Zeus?
Ph I did
St See now how good a thing is learnin
There is no Zeus Pheidippides
Ph Who then?
St Why Vortex reigns and he has turned out Zeus
Ph Oh me what stuff
St Be sure that this is so
Ph Who says so pray?
St The Melian—Socrates,
And Chaerephon who knows about the flea tracks
Ph And are you come to such a pitch of madness
As to put faith in brain struck men?
St O hush!
And don t blaspheme such very dexterous men
And sapient too men of such frugal habits
They never shave nor use your precious ointment
Nor go to baths to clean themselves but you
Have taken *me* for a corpse and cleaned me out
Come come make haste do go and learn for me
Ph What can one learn from them that is worth knowing?
St Learn! why whatever s clever in the world
And you shall learn how gross and dense you are
But stop one moment I ll be back directly *Exit*
Ph O me! what must I do with my mad father?
Shall I indict him for his lunacy
Or tell the undertakers of his symptoms?
St (*re entering*) Now then! you see this don t you? what do you call it?
Ph That? why a fowl
St Good! now then what is this?
Ph That s a fowl *too*
St What both! Ridiculous!
Never say that again but mind you always
Call this a fowless and the other a fowl
Ph A fowless! These then are the mighty secrets
You have picked up amongst those earth born fellows

St And lots besides but e erything I learn
I ta ht f rg t I m so old and stupid
Ph And this is what you have lost your mantle for?
St It s very absent som times tisn t lost
Ph And what ha e you d ne with your shoes you dotard you?
St Like Pericles all f r the best I ve lost them.
Com come go with me humour me in this
And then d what you l ke Ah! I remember
How I toh mour you a coaxing baby
With the first obol wh ch my judgesh p fetched me
Bou ht yo a go-cart at the great D asia
Ph Th time will come when you ll repent of this.
St Good boy to obey m H ll ! Socrates
Enter SOCR TES
Come he e come here I ve brought th s son of mine
Trouble enough I ll warrant you
S Poor infant
Not yet are f my suspension w nders.
Ph Y u d make a wondrous p ece f ware su pended
St Hey! Ha the lad! Do you abuse the M ster?
So And look, suth pended! In what foolish fashion
He mo thed the word w th pout ng lips agape.
How can *he* learn e on of s it
Timel ot t on dama ng replies?
Hype bolus, thou h lea nt *them for a t lent*
St O never fear! he s e y harp by nature
F when he was a littl hap figh
He u ed to bu ld small b by h ses, boats,
Go-ca t f leathe darling little frogs
Carved fr m pomegranates, y can t th nk how nicely!
So now I prithee teach him both yo r Log cs,
The B tt r o call *it a d th* W se
Which th th w se cause ca d feat th *Better*
Or f n t both at ll nts the W e
S Aye, w th his ow ears he sh ll hear them gue
I shan t be the
St B t please r membe th s,
G e him th kna k f eason ng d wn all Ju tice
Exit SOCR TES
Enter R GH LOG *d* W O LOGIC
Right Log Come how you self n w
with y u confid nt b w
—To the tag f y u dar !
Wro g Log c Le d wh you please
I hall sma h y u w th ease
If n aud enc be ther
R L Y ll m h me *you say*! A d who re *you*
I y?
W L A Log l k y
R.L. B t th W t of the two
W L. Y t you I c d b whom my B tter they d b
R.L. By what a t fice taught?
W L. By or inal thought
R L. Aye truly your trade so su ces ful is made
By means of these noodles of ours I m afra d
W L. Not noodles, but wise
R L. I ll sma h you and your lies!
W L By what method forsooth?
R L. By speaking th Truth
W L. Y *ur* w rds I will meet and entirely defeat
There *never was* Justice or Truth I r peat
R L. No Justice! you say?
W L. W ll, wl re does it stay?
R L. W th the Gods in the a
W L. If Ju tice be there
Ho v c mes it that Zeu coul I i father reduce
Yet l e with their Godships unpunished and *loose?*
R L. Ugh! U h! These e ils come th ck
I feel awfully sick
A ba n, quick qu ck!
W L. You re a useless old drone with o e foot in the g a e!
R L. You re a shameless, unpr nc pled d solute kna e!
W L. H y! a rosy festoon
R.L. And a ulgar buffoon!
W L. What! Lil es from *you*?
R L. *And a parricide too!*
W L. 'Tis with gold (you don t know it) you sp nkle my head
R L. O gold is it n w? but it used to be lead!
W L. But now it s a g ace and a gl ry instead
R L. You re a l ttle too bold
W L. You re a good deal too old
R.L. 'Tis thro gh you I well know n t a stripl ng w ll go
To attend t the rules wh ch re taught in the Schools
But Athens ne day shall be up to the fools
W L. How squal d your dress!
R L. Yours is f ne I confess
Y t of ld I declar but a pauper you were
A l pas ed yours lf off our compa sion to draw
As a Teleph s, (Eu ip d n)
W ll pleased from a beggarly wallet to gnaw
At nanities Pandeletea
W L. O me! for the w sdom you e mentioned in je t!
R L. O me! for the folly of you and the rest
Who y u *to destr* y th te child en employ!
W L. *H m* you ne er shall teach you are quite o t of date
R L. If n t h ll be lost as h e ll find to h s cost
T ught thing by you but to chatter and pr te
W L. He ra es as you see let him be let him be.
R L. Touch h m f you dar ! I bid you b ware
Ch Forbear fo bear to wrangle and scold!
Each of y u show
You what you taught their fathers f old
You l t us know
Your y tem u tried that hea ng each side
From the lips f th Rivals the youth may decide
To which of your schools he will go

R L This then will I do
W L And so will I too
Ch And who will put in his claim to begin?
W L If *he* wishes he may I kindly give way
And out of his argument quickly will I
Draw facts and devices to fledge the reply
Wherewith I will shoot him and smite and refute
him
And at last if a word from his mouth shall be heard
My sayings like fierce savage hornets shall pierce
His forehead and eyes
Till in fear and distraction he yields and he—dies!
Ch With thoughts and words and maxims
pondered well
Now th n in confidence let both begin
Try which his rival can in speech excel
Try which this perilous wordy war can win
Which all my votaries hopes are fondly centred in
O Thou who wert born our sires to adorn
with characters blameless and fair
Say on what you please say on and to these
your glorious Nature declare
R L To hear then prepare of the Discipline rare
which flourished in Athens of yore
When Honour and Truth were in fashion with youth
and Sobriety bloomed on our shore
First of all the old rule was preserved in our school
that boys should be seen and not heard
And then to the home of the Harpist would come
decorous in action and word
All the lads of one town though the snow peppered
down
in spite of all wind and all weather
And they sang an old son as they paced it along
not shambling with thighs glued together
O the dread shout of War how it peals from afar
or Pallas the Stormer adore
To some manly old air all simple and bare
which their fathers had chanted before
And should anyone dare the tune to impair
and with intricate twistings to fill
Such as Phrynis is fain and his long winded train
perversely to quaver and trill
Many stripes would he feel in return for his zeal
as to genuine Music a foe
And every one s thigh was forward and high
as they sat to be drilled in a row
So that nothing the while indecent or vile
the eye of a stranger might meet
And then with their hand they would smooth
down the sand
whenever they rose from their seat
To leave not a trace of themselves in the place
for a vigilant lover to view
They never would soil their persons with oil
but were inartificial and true
Nor tempered their throat to a soft mincing note
and sighs to their lovers addressed
Nor laid themselves out as they strutted about
to the wanton desires of the rest
Nor would anyone dare such stimulant fare
as the head of the radish to wish
Nor to make over bold with the food of the old
the anise and parsley and fish
Nor dainties to quaff nor giggle and laugh
nor foot within foot to enfold.
W L Faugh! this smells very strong of some musty
old song
and Chirrupers mounted in gold
And Slaughter of beasts and old fashioned feasts.
R L Yet these are the precepts which taught
The heroes of old to be hardy and bold
and the Men who at Marathon fought!
But now must the lad from his boyhood be clad
in a Man s all enveloping cloak
So that oft as the Panathenaea returns,
I feel myself ready to choke
When the dancers go by with their shields to their
thigh not caring for Pallas a jot
You therefore young man choose me while you
can
cast in with my Method your lot
And then you shall learn the forum to spurn
and from dissolute baths to abstain
And fashions impure and shameful abjure
and scorners repel with disdain
And rise from your chair if an elder be there
and respectfully give him your place
And with love and with fear your parents revere
and shrink from the brand of Disgrace
And deep in your breast be the Image impressed
of Modesty simple and true
Nor resort any more to a dancing girl s door
nor glance at the harlotry crew
Lest at length by the blow of the Apple they throw
from the hopes of your Manhood you fall
Nor dare to reply when your Father is nigh
nor musty old Japhet" to call
In your malice and rage that Sacred Old Age
which lovingly cherished your youth
W L Yes yes my young friend if to him you
attend
by Bacchus I swear of a truth
You will scarce with the sty of Hippocrates vie
as a mammy suck known even there!
R L But then you ll excel in the games you love
well
all blooming athletic and fair
Not learning to prate as your idlers debate
with marvellous prickly dispute
Nor dragged into Court day by day to make sport
in some small disagreeabl suit
But you will below to the Academe go
and under the olives contend
With your chaplet of reed in a contest of speed
with some excellent rival and friend
All fragrant with woodbine and peaceful content
and the leaf which the lime blossoms fling
When the plane whispers love to the elm in the
grove
in the beautiful season of Spring
If then you ll obey and do what I say
And follow with me the more ex ellent way
Your hest shall be white your kin shall be bright

Your arms shall be tight your tongue shall be sl ght
And everythin else shall be proper and right
E if yo pursue what men nowadays do,
You ll ha e, to begin a coal pallid skin
Arms small and chest weak, tongue practised to
speak,
Special laws ery long and the symptoms all strong
Which show that your life is licentious nd wrong
And your mind he'll prepare so that foul to be fair
And fair t be foul you shall always decla e
And you'll find yourself soon f ou listen to him,
W th the filth of Antimachus filled to th brim!
Ch. O glorious Sage! with loveliest Wisdom
teem
Sweet on thy words does a tient V rtue est!
Thrice happy they who watched thy Youth s
bri ht beaming!
Thou of th aunted geni s, to th best
This man has gained pplause His Wisdom stands
confessed.
And you w th clever words and thou hts must
eeds your case adorn
Else he will surely win the da nd you retreat
with scorn.
W.L. A e, say you so? why I ha e been
half burst I do so lon
To overthrow his argument
w th arguments more stron
I am the Lesser Logic? True
these Schoolmen call me so,
Simply because I was the first
of all mankind to show
How old established rules and laws
mi ht ontradicted be
And this, as ou ma guess, is worth
thousand pounds t me,
To take the feebler cause and yet
t w the disputation.
And mark me now how I ll confute
his boa ted Education!
I said that always from warm baths
the stripling must bstain
Wh must he on what ground do ou
of these warm baths complain?
R.L. Why t s th worst thing possibl
it quit unstrings a man.
W.L. Hold ther I got you round th waist
escape me if you can.
And first of all the sons of Zeus
whic h think you was th best?
Which as th manliest? which endured
m re t ls than ll the rest?
R.L. W ll, I ppose that Heracles
was bra est nd most bold.
W.L. And ar the baths t Heracles
so wonderfull cold?
Aha you blame warm baths, I think.
R.L. Thus, this is what th y say
This is the stuff our precious youth
ar hattern ll the day!
This is what makes them hau t the baths,
and shun the manlier Games!

W.L. W ll then, we'll take the Forum next
I praise it and he blames.
But if it was so bad do ou think
old Homer would ha e made
Nestor and all his worthies N
a real forensic trade?
W ll then he says a simpl ng a tongue
should alwa s idle be
I say it should be used of course
so there we disagree
And next he says you must be chaste
A most prepost rous plan!
Come tell me did you ev er know
one single blessed man
Gain the lea t good by cha tity?
come pro e I m wro g make ha te
R.L. Yes, many many! Peleus ga ned
a sword by bei g chaste
W.L. A sword indeed! wond ous meed
the unlucky fool obtained
Hyperbolus the Lamp-maker
hath many a talent gai ed
By kna ish tri ks which I ha e tau ht
but not a sword no, no!
R.L. Then Peleus d d to his chaste life
the bed of Thetis owe
W.L. And then he cut and ra away!
for nothing so engages
A woma s heart as forwa d wa mth,
old thred of those dark Ages!
For take this cha t ty young man
sift t inside and out
Count all the pleasures, all the j ys,
it bids you li e w thout
No kind of dames, no kind of games,
no la h ng feasting drinking—
Why lif itself is little worth
w thout these joys, I'm thi kin
Well, I must not er now the wa t
by N ture s self implanted
You lo seduc you can t help that
you e caught co victed, Granted
You done for you can t sa one word
while if you follow me
Indulge your genius, laugh and quaff
hold nothing base to be
Why f you re in adultery ca ght
Yo pleas will st ll be ample
You e done no wron you ll sa and then
bring Zeu as our xample
H f ll befor the wondrous powers
by Lo e nd Beauty w lded
And how can you, the Mortal stand
where He the Immortal y elded
R.L. A but suppose n spite f ll,
he must be wedged and sanded.[1]
Won t he be probed or else can y u
pr e t it? now be candid.
W.L. And what the damage f it should be
so?

[1] Punishments of those taken in adultery

R L What greater damage can the young man know?
W L What will you do if this dispute I win?
R L I ll be for ever silent
W L Good begin
The Counsellor from whence comes he?
R L From probed adulterers
W L I agree
The Tragic Poets whence are they?
R L From probed adulterers
W L So I say
The Orators what class of men?
R L All probed adulterers
W L Right again
You feel your error I ll engage
But look once more around the stage
Survey the audience which they be
Probed or not Probed
R L I see I see
W L Well give your verdict
R L It must go
For probed adulterers him I know
And him and him the Probed are most
W L How stand we then?
R L I own I ve lost
O Cinaeds Cinaeds take my robe!
Your words have won to you I run
To live and die with glorious Probe!

The two LOGICS *go out and enter* SOCRATES *from the Phrontisterion and* STREPSIADES *from his own house to see how his son s education has been progressing During the interval of the* CHORUS (1114 1130) *that education is supposed to be completed*

So Well what do you want? to take away your son
At once or shall I teach him how to speak?
St Teach him and flog him and be sure you well
Sharpen his mother wit grind the one edge
Fit for my little law suits and the other
Why make that serve for more important matters
So Oh never fear! He ll make a splendid sophist
St Well well I hope he ll be a poor pale rascal
Ch Go but in us the thought is strong
you will repent of this ere long
Now we wish to tell the Judges
all the blessings they shall gain
If as Justice plainly warrants
we the worthy prize obtain
First whenever in the Season
ye would fain your fields renew
All the world shall wait expectant
till we ve poured our rain on you
Then of all your crops and vineyards
we will take the utmost care
So that neither drought oppress them
nor the heavy rain impair
But if anyone amongst you
dare to treat our claims with scorn
Mortal he, the Clouds immortal
better had he ne er been born!
He from his estates shall gather
neither corn nor oil nor wine
For whenever blossoms sparkle
on the olive or the vine
They shall all at once be blighted
we will ply our slings so true
And if ever we behold him
building up his mansions new
With our tight and nipping hailstones
we will all his tiles destroy
But if he his friends or kinsfolk
would a marriage feast enjoy
All night long we ll pour in torrents
so perchance he ll rather pray
To endure the drought of Egypt
than decide amiss to-day!
St The fifth the fourth the third and then the second
And then that day which more than all the rest
I loathe and shrink from and abominate
Then comes at once that hateful Old and New day
And every single blessed dun has sworn
He ll stake his gage and ruin and destroy me
And when I *make a modest small request*
O my good friend part don t exact at present
And part defer and part remit they swear
So they shall never touch it and abuse me
As a rank swindler threatening me with actions
Now let them bring their actions! Who s afraid?
Not I if these have taught my son to speak
But here s the door I ll knock and soon find out
Boy! Ho there boy!
So I clasp Strepsiades
St And I clasp you but take this meal bag first
Tis meet and right to glorify one s Tutors
But tell me tell me has my son yet learnt
That Second Logic which he saw just now?
So He hath
St Hurrah! great Sovereign Knavery!
So You may escape whatever suit you please
St What if I borrowed before witnesses?
So Before a thousand and the more the merrier
St Then shall my song be loud and deep
Weep obol weighers weep weep weep
Ye and your principals and compound interests,
For ye shall never pester me again
Such a son have I bred
(He is within this door)
Born to inspire my foemen with dread
Born his old father s house to restore
Keen and polished of tongue is he
He my Champion and Guard shall be
He will set his old father free
Run you and call him forth to me
O my child! O my sweet! come out I entreat
Tis the voice of your sire
So Here s the man you require
St Joy joy of my heart!
So Take your son and depart
St O come O come my son my son
O dear! O dear!
O joy to see your beautiful complexion!

Ar now you ha e an aspect Negativ e
And D sputati e, and our nati e query
Shines forth there "What d ye sa " You e the true face
Which rogues put on, of inj red innocence.
You have the regular Attic look about you.
So now you sa me for twas you undid me.

Ph. What is it ails you?

S. Why the O d and New day

P. And is there such a day as O d nd New?

S. Yes that s the day they mean t stak their gages.

Ph. Th ll lose them if they stake them. What! do you think
That one da can be two da s, both together?

S. Wh can t it be so

Ph. Surel not or lse
A woman m t a once be old and oun

S. Still th law sa s so.

Ph. True but I believe
They don't quit understand t.

S. You explain t

Ph. O d Solon had a democratic turn.

S. Well, b t that nothin to th Old and New

Ph. Hence t en be fixed that summonses be issued
For these two days, the old on and t e new on
So that the gage be staked on the New month.

S. Wha mad him add th old then?

P. I will tell ou.
H wished the litigants to meet on *that* day
And compromise their quarrels if they could not,
Then let them fi t out on th ew month.

S. Wh then d Magistrates recei the stakes
On the O d and New instead of the New month?

Ph. Well, I belive th act like th For tasters.
They wish to ba th ga s soon as possib e,
And thus they gain who a day' foretaste of t

S. A a poor d pes, wh sit ye moonin there,
Game for is Artful Dod ers, you dul tones,
You ci ers, lambkins, butt piled up together!
Oh my ccess inspires me and I'll sin
Glad encomi s on me and thee, my son
Man, most b essed, most d i
What a wondrous wit is thine,
What a son to gra th l ne,
Friend and neighbours day by day
Th s will sa
When with en ious eyes m sants they see you win
B first I'll feast ou, so ome in, m son, com in.

Ex et as nd his wit ss.

Pasias Wh t must man lose his wn property!
N ever ever Better ha f sed
W h brazen than be so plag ed thus.
Ser and m own; d be I m forced
T ou bea witness nd what worse
I ne must quarrel w th m t wnsman here.
Wel I on t shame m country whi I li e,
I go fo I summon him.

St. (*entering*) Hallo!

P. T Old and New

S. Bear w tness, all!
H named two days. You'll summon m what for?

Pa. The fifty pounds I lent you when you bou ht
That iron grey

St. Just listen to th fellow!
The whole world knows that I d test all horses.

P. I swear you swore by all the God to pay me.

S. Well, now I swear I won t Pheid ppides
Has learnt since then th una werable Logic.

P. And will you therefore shirk my just demand?

St. Of course I will else why should he have learnt t?

Pa. And will you dare forswear it by the Gods?

S. The Gods indeed! What Gods?

P. Poseidon, Hermes, Zeus.

St. By Zeus I would,
Though I ga e twopence halfpenny for the privilege

Pa. O then confound you for a sham less rogue!

St. Hallo! this butt should be rubbed down with salt.

Pa. Zounds! you deride me!

St. Why twill hold four gallons.

Pa. You scape m not by M hty Zeus, and all The Gods!

S. I wond rfully like the God
A oath b Zeus is sport to know ng ones.

P. Sooner or later you'll repe t of this.
Come do you mean to pay ou debts or don t you?
T ll me and I'll be off

S. Now do ha e pat ence
I'll gi you clea answer in one moment

P. What do you think h ll do?

Witness I th k he'll pay you.

S. Where is that horrid dun O here now tell me
What you call this.

P. What I call that a trou h.

S. Heaven ! what a fool and do you want your money?
I d e er pa one penny to a f llow
Who calls my troughless, trou h. So ther s your answer

P. Then you won t pa m ?

St. No, ot if I know it
Come put your best foot forwa d nd be off
March off I say this in ant!

P. Ma I d e
If I don t go once and stak my gage!

Exit

St. No don t th E pound ar los e ough
And enl on my word I would o w h ou
To lose this too just for on su h d r

Enter AMYNI s.

Amynias Ah me! Oh Oh! Oh!

St. Hallo! who s that makin that horrible noise
Not one f Car us s a els Gods?

Am. Who cares to k ow what I am? what imports it
An ill-sta ed man

S. Then keep t to ourself.

[1]The credi or mentioned in l. 2...

[1]The creditor men ioned in l. 3

R L What greater damage can the young man know?
W L What will you do if this dispute I win?
R L I ll be for ever silent
W L Good begin
The Counsellor from whence comes he?
R L From probed adulterers
W L I agree
The Tragic Poets whence are they?
R L From probed adulterers
W L So I say
The Orators what class of men?
R L All probed adulterers
W L Right again
You feel your error I ll engage
But look once more around the stage
Survey the audience which they be
Probed or not Probed
R L I see I see
W L Well give your verdict
R L It must go
For probed adulterers him I know
And him and him the Probed are most
W L How stand we then?
R L I own I ve lost
O Cinaeds Cinaeds take my robe!
Your words have won to you I run
To live and die with glorious Probe!

The two LOGICS *go out and enter* SOCRATES *from the Phrontisterion and* STREPSIADES *from his own house to see how his son s education has been progressing During the interval of the* CHORUS (1114 1130) *that education is supposed to be completed*

So Well what do you want? to take away your son
At once or shall I teach him how to speak?
St Teach him and flog him and be sure you well
Sharpen his mother wit grind the one edge
Fit for my little law suits and the other
Why make that serve for more important matters
So Oh never fear! He ll make a splendid sophist
St Well well I hope he ll be a poor pale rascal
Ch Go but in us the thought is strong
you will repent of this ere long
Now we wish to tell the Judges
all the blessings they shall gain
If as Justice plainly warrants
we the worthy prize obtain
First whenever in the Season
ye would fain your fields renew
All the world shall wait expectant
till we ve poured our rain on you
Then of all your crops and vineyards
we will take the utmost care
So that neither drought oppress them,
nor the heavy rain impair
But if anyone amongst you
dare to treat our claims with scorn
Mortal he, the Clouds immortal
better had he ne er been born!
He from his estates shall gather
neither corn nor oil nor wine
For whenever blossoms sparkle
on the olive or the vine
They shall all at once be blighted
we will ply our slings so true
And if ever we behold him
building up his mansions new
With our tight and nipping hailstones
we will all his tiles destroy
But if he his friends or kinsfolk
would a marriage feast enjoy
All night long we ll pour in torrents
so perchance he ll rather pray
To endure the drought of Egypt
than decide amiss to-day!
St The fifth the fourth the third and then the second
And then that day which more than all the rest
I loathe and shrink from and abominate
Then comes at once that hateful Old and New day
And every single blessed dun has sworn
He ll stake his gage and ruin and destroy me
And when I make a modest small request
O my good friend part don t exact at present
And part defer and part remit they swear
So they shall never touch it and abuse me
As a rank swindler threatening me with actions
Now let them bring their actions! Who s afraid?
Not I if these have taught my son to speak
But here s the door I ll knock and soon find out
Boy! Ho there boy!
So I clasp Strepsiades
St And I clasp you but take this meal bag first
'Tis meet and right to glorify one s Tutors
But tell me tell me has my son yet learnt
That Second Logic which he saw just now?
So He hath
St Hurrah! great Sovereign Knavery!
So You may escape whatever suit you please
St What if I borrowed before witnesses?
So Before a thousand and the more the merrier
St Then shall my song be loud and deep
Weep obol weighers weep weep weep
Ye and your principals and compound interests,
For ye shall never pester me again
Such a son have I bred
(He is within this door)
Born to inspire my foemen with dread
Born his old father s house to restore
Keen and polished of tongue is he
He my Champion and Guard shall be
He will set his old father free
Run you and call him forth to me
O my child! O my sweet! come out I entreat
Tis the voice of your sire
So Here s the man you require
St Joy joy of my heart!
So Take your son and depart
St O come O come my son my son
O dear! O dear!
O joy to see your beautiful complexion!

I bade him bring his lyre and sing
the supper to adorn
Some lay of old Simonides,
as, how the Ram was shorn
But he replied to sing at meal
was coarse and obsolete
Like some old beldame humming airs
the while she grinds her wheat
Ph. And should you not be thrashed who told
your son, from food abstaining
To sing as though you were, forsooth
cicalas entertaining
St You hear him! so he said just now
or e er high words began
And next he called Simonides
a very sorry man.
And when I heard him, I could scarce
my rising wrath command
Yet so I did, and him I bid
take myrtle in his hand
And chant some lines from Aeschylus,
but he replied with ire
Believe me, I'm not one of those
who Aeschylus admire
That rough unpolished turgid bard
that mouther of bombast!"
When he said this, my heart began
to heave extremely fast
Yet still I kept my passion down,
and said "Then prithee you
Sing one of those new fangled songs
which modern striplings do."
And he began the shameful tale
Euripides has told
How a brother and sister lived
incestuous lives of old
Then, then I could no more restrain
but first I must confess
With strong abuse I loaded him
and so, as you may guess,
We stormed and bandied threat for threat
till out at last he flew
And smashed and thrashed and thumped and bumped
and bruised me black and blue
Ph. And rightly too, who coolly dared
Euripides to blame
Most sapient bard
St Most sapient bard!
you what's your fitting name?
Ah! but he'll pommel me again
Ph He will and justly too
S. What justly heartless villain! when
'twas I who nurtured you
I knew your little lisping ways,
how soon, you'd hardly think,
If you cried "bree!" I guessed your wants,
and used to give you drink
If you said "mamm" I fetched you bread
with fond discernment true,
And you could hardly say "Cacca!"
when through the door I flew
And held you out a full arm's length
your little needs to do

But now when I was crying
That I with pain was dying
You brute! you would *not* tarry
Me out of doors to carry
But choking with despair
I've been and done it there
Ch Sure all young hearts are palpitating now
To hear him plead
Since if those lips with artful words avow
The daring deed
And once a favouring verdict win,
A fig for every old man's skin
O thou! who *rakest up new* thoughts
with daring hands profane.
Try all you can ingenious man,
that verdict to obtain
Ph. How sweet it is these novel arts,
these clever words to know
And have the power established rules
and laws to overthrow
Why in old times when horses were
my sole delight 'twas wonder
If I could say a dozen words
without some awful *blunder!*
But now that he has made me quit
that reckless mode of living
And I have been to subtle thoughts
my whole attention giving
I hope to prove by logic strict
'tis right to beat my father
St O! buy your horses back by Zeus,
since I would ten times rather
Have to support a four in hand
so I be struck no more.
Ph Peace I will now resume the thread
where I broke off before
And first I ask. when I was young
did you not strike me then?
St Yea for I loved and cherished you
Ph Well, solve me this again
Is it not just that I your son
should cherish you alike
And strike you, since as you observe
to cherish means to strike?
What! must my body needs be scourged
and pounded black and blue
And yours be scathless? was not I
as much freeborn as you?
"Children are whipped and shall not sires be whipped?"
Perhaps you'll urge that children's minds
alone are taught by blows—
Well Age is Second Childhood then
that everybody knows.
And as by old experience Age
should guide its steps more clearly
So when they err they surely should
be punished more severely
St But Law goes everywhere for me
deny it if you can
Ph Well was not he who made the law
a man, a mortal man
As you or I, who in old times

Am O heavy fate! O Fortune thou hast broken
My chariot wheels! Thou hast undone me Pallas!
St How! has Tlepolemus been at you man?
Am Jeer me not friend but tell your worthy son
To pay me back the money which I lent him
I m in a bad way and the times are pressing
St What money do you mean?
Am Why what he borrowed
St You *are* in a bad way I really think
Am Driving my four wheel out I fell by Zeus
St You rave as if you d fall n times out of mind
Am I rave? how so? I only claim my own
St You can t be quite right surely
Am Why what mean you?
St I shrewdly guess your brain s received a shake
Am I shrewdly guess that you ll receive a summons
If you don t pay my money
St Well then tell me
Which theory do you side with that the rain
Falls fresh each time or that the Sun draws back
The same old rain and sends it down again?
Am I m very sure I neither know nor care
St Not care! good heavens! and do *you* claim your money
So unenlightened in the Laws of Nature?
Am If you re hard up then pay me back the Interest
At least
St Int-er est? what kind of a beast is that?
Am What else than day by day and month by month
Larger and larger still the silver grows
As time sweeps by?
St Finely and nobly said
What then! think you the Sea is larger now
Than twas last year?
Am No surely tis no larger
It is not right it should be
St And do you then
Insatiable grasper! when the Sea
Receiving all these Rivers grows no larger
Do you desire your silver to grow larger?
Come now you prosecute your journey off!
Here fetch the whip
Am Bear witness I appeal
St Be off! what won t you? Gee up sigma brand!
Am I say! a clear assault!
St You won t be off?
I ll stimulate you Zeus! I ll goad your haunches
Exit AMYNIAS
Aha! you run I thought I d stir you up
You and your phaetons and wheels and all! *Exit*

Chorus

What a thing it is to long for matters which are wrong!
For you see how this old man
Is seeking if he can
His creditors trepan
And I confidently say
That he will this very day
Such a blow
Amid his prosperous cheats receive
that he will deeply deeply grieve

For I think that he has won what he wanted for his son
And the lad has learned the way
All justice to gainsay
Be it what or where it may
That he ll trump up any tale
Right or wrong and so prevail
This I know
Yea! and perchance the time will come
when he shall wish his son were dumb

Enter STREPSIADES *and* PHEIDIPPIDES
St Oh! Oh!
Help! Murder! Help! O neighbours kinsfolk townsmen
Help one and all against this base assault
Ah! Ah! my cheek! my head! O luckless me!
Wretch! do you strike your father?
Ph Yes Papa
St See! See! he owns he struck me
Ph To be sure
St Scoundrel! and parricide! and house breaker!
Ph Thank you go on go on do please go on
I am quite delighted to be called such names!
St O probed Adulterer
Ph Roses from your lips.
St Strike you your father?
Ph O dear yes what s more,
I ll prove I struck you justly
St Struck me justly!
Villain! how can you strike a father justly?
Ph Yes and I ll demonstrate it if you please
St Demonstrate this?
Ph O yes quite easily
Come take your choice which Logic do you choose?
St Which what?
Ph Logic the Better or the Worse?
St Ah then in very truth I ve had you taught
To reason down all Justice if you think
You can prove this that it is just and right
That fathers should be beaten by their sons!
Ph Well well I think I'll prove it if you ll listen
So that even you won t have one word to answer
St Come I should like to hear what you ve to say
Ch *Tis yours old man some method to contrive*
This fight to win
He would not without arms wherewith to strive
So bold have been
He knows be sure whereon to trust
His eager bearing proves he must
So come and tell us from what cause
this sad dispute began
Come tell us how it first arose
do tell us if you can
St Well from the very first I will
the whole contention show
'Twas when I went into the house
to feast him as you know

THE WASPS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SOSIAS servant of Philocleon	CURS
XANTHIAS servant of Philocleon	A GUEST
PHILOCLEON	A BREAD-GIRL
B YCLEO son of Philocleon	A COMPLAINANT
BOY	CHORUS OF WASPS

The p st ore s h   d g be wo two drowsy s es h have been keep g g rd a night before an Athen an h se I is still dark but the day is at h nd

So. You ill-starred Xanthias, what s th matter now?
Xan. Th m htl wat h I m studyi   t relieve
So. Wh then, your ribs will ha e a score against ou.
Do ou forg t what sort f beast w re guardi g?
X No, b t I'd fain just d owse dull care aw y
So. W ll, try our luck for I too feel a sort
Of drows sweet ess settlin o e m es.
Xa Sure ou   a ma iac or Corybant.
So (producing me f sk) N   is a sleep from g eat Sabazius hold er
Xa. (producing another) Aha and I m our f llow otary ther
M lids too f lt just now th fierc   ssault
Of stron Median nod-compellin sleep
And then I d eamed   d eam such   strange d eam!
So And so did I th   trangest   er I heard of.
B t tell ours first
X   M thou ht a monstrous ea le
Cam fl   g towards th ma k t plac   nd ther
Seized in t   la   win ln g brass shi ld
And bore t   p t toum h to th   k
And then—Cleon to   fled ff nd dro ped it
So Wh th   Cleon mus   quite   riddl
Xa How so
So   A man will k hi boon companions,
What is tha bea   which throws awa   t shi ld
Alik in ai   in ocea   th field?
X O hat an ill hap waits on   that ha e seen
So trans   ssion
So   T k   t not t   heart,
'Twil be   harm, I swea   t b   th Gods.
X   N harm t   see   man throw off hi shi ld!
B t now tell   ours.
So   Ah mir   bi on   man is
Abou th   whol   ea   essel of th stat
Xa T ll us t on   th keel of th affair
So 'Twa   m earliest sleep methought I saw
A flock of heep assembled   the Pnyx,
Si ting close pa ked, with little cloaks and sta es
Then t   these heep I heard or seemed to hear
An all recepti e grampu hoo ng forth
In tone and accent like   scalded pi
Xa Pheu h!
So   Fh?
Xa   Stop stop don t tell us any more
Your dream sm ll horribl   of putrid hides.
So Then the   le grampus, scales n hand
wei hed out
B ts f fat beef, cut up
Xa   Woe worth the day!
H mea s t   cut our city up in bits.
So M thou ht beside him, on the ground I saw
Theorus seated with a ra en s head.
Then Al biades l ped out to me
"Cr emark! Theorus has a cwa en s head"
Xa Well li ped! and right!   Alcibiades!
So But s thi n t ill-omened, that a man
Turn to a crow?
Xa   Na   e c llent
So   How?
X   How!
Bei g   man h   straight becomes   crow
I   t not ob   ous t   conjecture that
H   goin   to lea e us, goin   to the crows?
S   Shall   t pa   two obol then, nd hire
O   wh so cl   er inte pr ts dreams?
Xa Come l t me tell th   story to the aud ence
W th just these few emarks, by way of pr face
Expect not f om u   somethin   mighty grand
Nor   t some m rth purloined from Megara.
W ha   o bra   f servants her   t   scatter
N   t from their ba ket out   mon   th   aud ence
N   H racles d frauded of hi   supper
Nor   t Euripides besmir hed a ain
No, nor thou h Cleon hine b   fortun   s favour
Will we t   mincemeat chop the man again.
O rs is a littl   tal   w th meaning in t
N t too r n ed   nd   quisite for you,
Y t w tt r far tha   ulga comed
You see that g eat bi   man th   man asleep
Upon the roof al ft w ll that   ou master
He keeps hi father her   h   t up within
And bid us ua d h m that h   ur   t out
For h   th fathe   ha a tra   e d sease
Whi h non   of you w ll know or yet conjecture
Unless we t ll   lse   f you think so, guess.

talked over all the crowd
And think you that to you or me
the same is not allowed
To change it so that sons by blows
should keep their fathers steady?
Still we ll be liberal and blows
which we ve received already
We will forget we ll have no ex
post facto legislation
—Look at the game cocks look at all
the animal creation
Do not *they* beat their parents? Aye
I say then that in fact
They are as we except that they
no special laws enact

St Why don t you then if always where
the game cock leads you follow
Ascend your perch to roost at night
and dirt and ordure swallow?

Ph The case is different there old man
as Socrates would see

St Well then you ll blame yourself at last
if you keep striking me

Ph How so?

St Why if it s right for me to punish you my son
You can if you have got one yours

Ph *Aye but suppose I ve none*
Then having gulled me you will die
while I ve been flogged in vain

St Good friends! I really think he has
some reason to complain
I must conced he has put the case
in quite a novel light
I really think we should be flogged
unless we act aright!

Ph Look to a fresh idea then

St He ll be my death I vow

Ph Yet then perhaps you will not grudge
even what you suffer now

St How! will you make me like the blows
which I ve received to-day?

Ph Yes for I ll beat my mother too

St What! What is that you say!
Why this is worse than all

Ph But what if as I proved the other
By the same Logic I can prove
tis right to beat my mother?

St *Aye! what indeed! if this you plead*
If this you think to win
Why then for all I care you may
To the Accursed Pit convey
Yourself with all your learning new
Your master and your Logic too
And tumble headlong in
O Clouds! O Clouds! I owe all this to you!
Why did I let you manage my affairs!

Ch Nay nay old man you owe it to yourself
Why didst thou turn to wicked practices?

St Ah but ye should have asked me that before
And not have spurred a poor old fool to evil

Ch Such is our plan We find a man
On evil thoughts intent
Guide him along to shame and wrong
Then leave him to repent

St Hard words alas! yet not more hard than just
It was not right unfairly to keep back
The money that I borrowed Come my darling
Come and destroy that filthy Chaerephon
And Socrates for they ve deceived us both!

Ph No I will lift no hand against my Tutors.

St Yes do come reverence Paternal Zeus

Ph Look there! Paternal Zeus! what an old fool
Is there a Zeus?

St There is

Ph There is *no* Zeus.
Young Vortex reigns and he has turned out Zeus

St No Vortex reigns that was my foolish thought
All through this vortex here Fool that I was
To think a piece of earthenware a God

Ph Well rave away talk nonsense to yourself *Exit*

St *Oh! fool fool fool how mad I must have been*
To cast away the Gods for Socrates
Yet Hermes gracious Hermes be not angry
Nor crush me utterly but look with mercy
On faults to which his idle talk hath led me
And lend thy counsel tell me had I better
Plague them with lawsuits or how else annoy them
(Affects to listen)
Good your advice is good I ll have no law suits
I ll go at once and set their house on fire
The prating rascals Here here Xanthias
Quick quick here bring your ladder and your
pitchfork
Climb to the roof of their *vile thinking house*
Dig at their tiles dig stoutly an thou lovest me
Tumble the very house about their ears
And someone fetch me here a lighted torch
And I ll soon see if boasters as they are
They won t repent of what they ve done to me

1st Student (within) O dear! O dear!

St Now now my torch send out a lusty flame

1st Stu (within) Man! what are you at there?

St What am I at? I ll tell you
I m splitting straws with your house rafters here

2nd Stu (within) Oh me! who s been and set our
house on fire?

St Who was it think you that you stole th
cloak from?

3rd Stu (within) O Murder! Murder!

St That s the very thing
Unless this pick prove traitor to my hopes
Or I fall down and break my blessed neck

So (at the window) Hallo! what are you at up on
our roof?

St I walk on air and contemplate the Sun

So O! I shall suffocate O dear! O dear!

Chaerephon And I poor devil shall be burnt to
death

St For with what aim did ye insult the Gods
And pry around the dwellings of the Moon?
Strike smite them spare them not for many reasons,
But most because they have blasphemed the Gods!

Ch *Lead out of the way for I think we may say*
We have acted our part very fairly to-day

Donkey, why grieve? at bein' sold to-day?
Get up, why grunt and groan, unless you carry
Some new Odysseus there?

Xa. And, in good truth,
Here is a fellow clinging on beneath.

Bd. Who? where?

Xa. Why here.

Bd. Why what in the world is this?
Who are you, sirrah?

Ph. Noman I, by Zeus.

Bd. Where from?

Ph. From Ithaca, son of Runaway.

Bd. Noman I promise to no good you'll be.
Drag him out there from under. O the villain,
The place he had crept to! Now he seems to me
The very image of a summons's foal.

Ph. Come now, hands off, or you and I shall fight.

Bd. Fight! what about?

Ph. About a donkey's shadow.

Bd. You're a born bad one, with your tricks and fetches.

Ph. Bad! O my gracious! then you don't know yet
How good I am: but wait until you taste
The seasoned paunchlet of a prime old judge.

Bd. Get along in, you and your donkey too.

Ph. O help me, fellow-dicasts: help me, Cleon!

Bd. Bellow within there when the door is shut.
Now pile a heap of stones against the door,
And shoot the door-pin home into the bar,
And heave the beam athwart it, and roll up,
Quick, the great mortar-block.

So. (*starting*) Save us! what's that?
Whence fell that clod of dirt upon my head?

Xa. Belike some mouse dislodged it from above.

So. A mouse? O no, a rafter-haunting dicast,
Wriggling about behind the tiling there.

Bd. Good lack! the man is changing to a sparrow.
Sure he'll fly off: where, where's the casting-net?
Shoo! shoo there! shoo! 'Fore Zeus, 'twere easier work
To guard Scione than such a sire as this.

So. Well but at last we have fairly scared him in,
He can't slip out, he can't elude us now,
So why not slumber just—just—drop?

Bd. Slumber! you rogue! when in a little while
His fellow justices will come this way
Calling him up.

So. Why, sir, 'tis twilight yet.

Bd. Why then, by Zeus, they are very late to-day.
Soon after midnight is their usual time
To come here, carrying lights, and warbling tunes
Sweet-charming-old-Sidono-Phrynichéan
Wherewith they call him out.

So. And if they come,
Had we not better pelt them with some stones?

Bd. Pelt them, you rogue! you might as well provoke
A nest of wasps as anger these old men.
Each wears beside his loins a deadly sting,
Wherewith they smite, and on with yells and cries
They leap, and strike at you, like sparks of fire.

So. Tut! never trouble, give me but some stones,
I'll chase the biggest wasps-nest of them all.

Exeunt. Enter CHORUS OF WASPS.

Chorus. Step out, step out, my comrades stout: no loitering, Comias, pound along,
You're shirking now, you used, I trow, to pull as tough as leathern thong,
Yet now, with ease, Charinades can walk a brisker pace than you.
Ho! Strymodore of Conthyle, the best of all our dicast crew,
Has old Euergides appeared, and Chabes too from Phlya, pray?
Ah! here it strains, the poor remains, alas! alas! alack the day,
Of that mad set, I mind it yet, when once we paced our nightly round
In years gone by, both you and I, along Byzantium's wall, and found
And stole away the baker's tray, and sliced it up, and chopped it well,
A merry blaze therewith to raise, and so we cooked our pimpernel.
On, on again, with might and main: for Laches' turn is come to-day:
Quick, look alive, a splendid hive of wealth the fellow's got, they say.
And Cleon too, our patron true, enjoined us each betimes to bring
Of angers sore an ample store, a good three days' provisioning,
On all the man's unrighteous plans a vengeance well-deserved to take.
Come, every dear and tried compeer, come quickly, come, ere morning break,
And as you go, be sure you throw the light around on every side;
Lest somewhere nigh a stone may lie, and we therefrom be damnified.

Boy. O father, father, here's some mud! look sharp or in you'll go.

Ch. Pick up a stick and trim the wick, a better light to show.

Boy. Nay, father, with my finger thus, I choose to trim the lamp.

Ch. How dare you rout the wick about, you little wasteful scamp,
And that with oil so scarce? but no, it don't disturb *your* quiet,
However dear the oil may be, when I have got to buy it.

Boy. If with your knuckles once again you monish us, I swear
We'll douse the light, and take to flight, and leave you floundering there.
Then wading on without the lamp in darkness, I'll be bound
You'll turn and splash the mud about like snipes in marshy ground.

Chorus

Ah, greater men than you, my boy, 'tis often mine to beat.
But, bless me, this is filth indeed I feel beneath my feet:

Amynias there the son of Pronapes
Says he s a dice lover but he s quite out
So Ah he conjectures from his own disease
Xa Nay but the word does really end with lover
Then Sosias here observes to Dercylus
That tis a *drink* lover
So Confound it no
That s the disease of honest gentlemen
Xa Then next Nicostratus of Scambon says
It is a sacrifice or stranger lover
So What like Philoxenus? No by the dog
Not quite so lewd Nicostratus as that
Xa Come you waste words you ll never find it out
So all keep silence if you want to know
I ll tell you the disease old master has
He is a *law court* lover no man like him
Judging is what he dotes on and he weeps
Unless he sit on the front bench of all
At night he gets no sleep no not one grain
Or if he doze the tiniest speck his soul
Flutters in dreams around the water clock
So used he is to holding votes he wakes
With thumb and first two fingers closed as one
That offers incense on a new moon s day
If on a gate is written Lovely Demus
Meaning the son of Pyrilamp he goes
And writes beside it Lovely Verdict box
The cock which crew from eventide he said
Was tampered with he knew to call him late
Bribed by officials whose accounts were due
Supper scarce done he clamours for his shoes
Hurries ere daybreak to the Court and sleeps
Stuck like a limpet to the doorpost there
So sour he is the long condemning line
He marks for all then homeward like a bee
Laden with wax beneath his finger nails
Lest he lack votes he keeps to judge withal
A private pebble beach secure within
Such is his frenzy and the more you chide him
The more he judges so with bolts and bars
We guard him straitly that he stir not out
For ill the young man brooks his sire s disease
And first he tried by soft emollient words
To win him over not to don the cloak
Or walk abroad but never a jot he yielded
He washed and purged him then but never a jot
A Corybant next he made him but old master
Timbrel and all into the New Court bursts
And there sits judging So when these rites failed
We cross the Strait and in Aegina place him
To sleep the night inside Asclepius temple
Lo! with the dawn he stands at the Court rails!
Then after that we let him out no more
But he! he dodged along the pipes and gutters
And so made off we block up every cranny
Stopping and stuffing them with clouts of rag
Quick he drove pegs into the wall and clambered
Up like an old jackdaw and so hopped out
Now then we compass all the house with nets
Spreading them round and mew him safe within
Well sirs Philocleon is the old man s name
Ay truly and the son s Bdelycleon
A wondrous high and mighty mannered man
Bdelycleon (*from the roof*) Xanthias and Sosias! are ye fast asleep?
Xa O dear!
So What now?
Xa Bdelycleon is up
Bd One of you two run hither instantly
For now my father s got into the kitchen
Scurrying mouselike somewhere Mind he don t
Slip through the hole for turning off the water
And you keep pressing at the door
So Ay ay sir
Bd O heavens! what s that? what makes the chimney rumble?
Hallo sir! who are you?
Philocleon (*in the chimney*) I m smoke escaping
Bd Smoke? of what wood?
Ph I m of the fig tree panel
Bd Ay and there s no more stinging smoke than that
Come trundle back what won t you? where s the board?
In with you! nay I ll clap this log on too
There now invent some other stratagem
But I m the wretchedest man that ever was
They ll call me now the son of Chimney smoked
So He s at the door now pushing
Bd Press it back then
With all your force I m coming there directly
And O be careful of the bolt and bar
And mind he does not nibble off the door pin
Ph (*within*) Let me out villains! let me out to judge
What shall Dracontides escape unpunished!
Bd What if he should?
Ph Why once when I consulted
The Delphian oracle the God replied
That I should wither if a man escaped me
Bd Apollo shield us what a prophecy!
Ph O let me out or I shall burst I shall
Bd No by Poseidon! no Philocleon never!
Ph O then by Zeus I ll nibble through the net
Bd You ve got no teeth my beauty
Ph Fire and fury!
How shall I slay thee how? Give me a sword
Quick quick or else a damage cessing tablet
Bd Hang it he meditates some dreadful deed
Ph O no I don t I only want to take
And sell the donkey and his panniers too
'Tis the new moon to-day
Bd And if it is
Cannot I sell them?
Ph Not so well as I
Bd No but much better drive the donkey out
Xa How well and craftily he dropped the bait
To make you let him through
Bd But he caught nothing
That haul at least for I perceived the trick
But I will in and fetch the donkey out
No no he shan t come slipping through again
(*Gets donkey*)

P He will let me do no mischief,
and no mor a lawsuit try
True it is he'll feast and pet m
b t with that I won t comply
Ch. Thus the Demagogcleon blared
Out a a nst ou si ce you dared
Truth about th fleet to show
H must be in ol ed I see
I some dark *conspir cy*
Else he durst t use ou so.
It is time some mean f escape t find,
some n el ingeniou plan that so,
Unseen of our son you ma get you down,
al hi g n safet h re bel w
Ph. O what hall it be? consic er it !
I'm ready to d whate er is planned
So sore I m longin a circu t to go,
throu h th h ts of the Court w th ote in m
hand
Ch Ca ou find no cran o seer t run,
l.ere h which, from within, our path to urg
And then Like wily Od sseus, here
disguised n tatters and tags, mer e?
Ph. Each cra v barred there never run,
thro hich thou h t were but a mid e could
squeeze
You must think if you ca of a l k lier plan
I can t run out lik a runn t heese
Ch. O ooo t you remember the old c mpa gn
hen ou stol the pit and l t ourself down,
And awa b the sid of the wall you hied?
T a when w had captur d Naxos town
Ph. Ah w ll I remembe ! but what f that?
t quite othe ffa t to-day
For then I wa you g and then I ould teal,
and o er m self I possessed full sway
And then ne gua ded m st ps, b t I
Wa free where e I hose t fl
Whil t ow n ers l es and st eet
Armed men w th arms e t t oned bout
W ch w th re that I steal t out
And th at the gate ou nay see those
two
W ting with p t to pit me throu h,
Lik cat that is runnin awa with the
meat
Ch. W ll b t now be qui kl hapin
Some contri ance for escapin
Morni g b eaks, my h ney be
Ph Then h best that I can think f
to gnaw these meshes through
Ma Di t nna q een f h int rs,
pa don m the deed I do.
Ch Spok lik man whose ff ts
w ll sal at on s goal ensue.
Pl our j w th a lustily
Ph Th l gnaw th m through compl tel
—Ah! b t d not use bout
W must use the g eatest ca t on
lest Bdelycleon fi ds us out
Ch. Fea not fear not f he peak
He shall gnaw his heart nd seek
For h s l fe to run ama n
We will quickly make him learn
Nevermore aga n to spurn
Th hol statutes of the Twa n.
So now to the w nd w la h th cord
and twi e t securel your l mbs around
With all Dope thes fill our soul
then let yourself cle erl down to the ground
Ph But suppose they catch me suspended here
and hoist me up by the l ne aga n
And angle me into the house once more
say what e will do to deli er me then.
Ch Our hearts of oak we ll summon to aid,
a d all gi e battl at once for you.
'Twere a n to attempt to deta n ou more
such wonderful feats we a e going to do.
Ph This th n w ll I do, confid g in you
and if anythin happens to me I implore
That you t k me up and bewa l my fate
and bury me under the court house floor
Ch O noth g nothing w ll happen to you
keep up old comrade your heart and hope
First b eathe a prayer to your f thers god
th n l t yourself down by the trusty rope
Ph O L rus, neighbor r and hero and lord!
thou lo est th selfsame pleasures as I
D y after da we both e j y
the suppliant s tears and his wail ng cry
Thou camest her thine bode to f x,
on purpose t listen t sounds so sweet
The only h ro of all that deign
b the mourn r side to assume his seat
O pit thin ld familia friend
O sa e me nd uccour me Power Di ine!
And ever a ai will I d m needs
b the osi r mattin that guards thy shrine
Bd G t up g t p
BDEL CL ON *s ddenly rea wears and wakes up the slumber g slaves*
So Why what s n the w nd?
Bd Some one seems circlin me round and round
So I the o d ma sl ppin away thro a h l ?
Bd No, b Zeus, but h lets h ms lf down to the
g ound
T ed on to the rope
So You nfamou wretch!
what won t you be qui t and not come down?
Bd Climb up b the other window sill
nd wall p him well with th harvest crown.
I warra the'll peedily back t *en first*
when he s thrashed w th the b nch f utumnal
fruits.
Ph Help help! all those who e propose
this ea to busy themsel es with uits.
Smicythio h lp! Tisiades, h lp!
Ph edeipnus, Chremon th fray begin
O n worn ver a sist you friend
befor I m carried way within.
Ch Wh for s mbers, wher f sl mbers,
that resentm t n our b e t
S ch a wh n a rash assailant
da es pr ok our hornets-nest?

Ay and within four days from this
or sooner it is plain
God will send down upon our town
a fresh supply of rain
So dense and thick around the wick
these thieves collect and gather
And that s as everybody knows
a sign of heavy weather
Well well tis useful for the fruits
and all the backward trees
To have a timely fall of rain
and eke a good North breeze
But how is this? Our friend not here!
how comes it he s so slack?
By Zeus he never used to be
at all a hanger back
He always marched before us all
on legal cares intent
And some old tune of Phrynichus
he warbled as he went
O he s a wonder for the songs!
Come comrades one and all
Come stand around the house and sing
its master forth to call
If once he hears me tuning up
I know it won t be long
Before he comes creep creeping out
from pleasure at the song

How is it our friend is not here to receive us?
Why comes he not forth from his dwelling?
Can it be that he s had the misfortune to lose
His one pair of shoes
Or striking his toe in the dark by the grievous
Contusion is lamed and his ankle inflamed?
Or his groin has it may be a swelling
He of us all I ween
Was evermore the austerest and most keen
Alone no prayers he heeded
Whene er for grace they pleaded
He bent (like this) his head
You cook a stone he said

Is it all of that yesterday s man who cajoled us
And slipped through our hands the deceiver
Pretending a lover of Athens to be
Pretending that he
Was the first of the Samian rebellion that told us?
Our friend may be sick with disgust at the trick
And be now lying ill of a fever
That would be like him quite
But now up up nor gnaw your soul with spite
There comes a traitor base
A wealthy rogue from Thrace
Safe in our toils we ve got him
Up up old friend and pot him!

On with you boy on with you

Boy Father if a boon I pray
Will you grant it father eh?
Ch Certainly I will my son
Tell me what you d have me buy
Dibs my son? Hey my son?
Dibs it is undoubtedly
Boy Dibs my father! No my father!
Figs! for they are sweeter far
Ch You be hanged first yet you shall not
Have them monkey when you are
Boy Then my father woe betide you!
Not another step I ll guide you
Ch Is it not enough that I
With this paltry pay must buy
Fuel bread and sauce for three?
Must I needs buy figs for thee!
Boy Father if the Archon say
That the Court won t sit to day
Tell me truly father mine
Have we wherewithal to dine?
O my father should not we
Then in Straits of Helle be?
Ch Out upon it! out upon it!
Then indeed I should not know
For a little bit of supper
Whither in this world to go
Boy Why my mother didst thou breed me
giving nothing else to feed me
But a store of legal woe?
Ch Empty scrip! O empty show
Bootless fruitless ornament!
Boy O! O! woe! woe!
Ours to sorrow and lament
Ph (*appearing above*) Long my reins have been stirred
Long through chinks have I heard
Heard your voices below
Vain my efforts to sing
These forbid me to go
Vainly my sad heart yearns
Yearns to be marching with you
On to the judgement urns
There some mischief to do
O change to smoke by a lightning stroke
Dread thundering Zeus! this body of mine
Till I m like Proxenides like the son
Of Sellus that false tree vine
O Sovereign pity my woeful lot
Vouchsafe to grant me my heart s desire
Fry me in dust with a glittering hot
Red bolt of celestial fire
Then take me up with thy hand divine
And puff me and plunge me in scalding brine
Or turn me into the stone whereon
They count the votes when the trial is done
Ch Who is he that thus detains you?
Who with bolted door restrains you?
Tell us you will speak to friends
Ph Tis my son but don t be bawling
for he s slumbering now at ease
There upon the roof before you
drop your tone a little please
Ch What s his object idle trifler
that he does such things as these?
What s the motive he pretends?

Ph. He will let m d no misch ef,
and no more a lawsuit try
True it is he'll fea t and pet me
but w th that I won t comply
Ch This the Demago leon blared
Out against ou since ou dared
Truth bout the fleet t show
He must be in ol ed I see
In some dark *conspiracy*
Else he durst not use ou so.
It ume some mea s of escape to find
some no el en ou plan, that so,
L een f our son you may g t ou down,
alight n in saf ty he e below
Ph O what hail it be? consid r t vel
I m read to do whate r is planned
So sore I m lon in a circuit to go,
through the li s f the Court w th a vote n m
hand.
Ch Ca ou find o cann or sec et run,
throu h which, from w th your path to urge
And the h e wil Odysseu h re
d guised in tatt rs nd rags, emerge?
Ph. Ea h cran s bar ed th r a run
thro h ch thou h t wer but midge could
sq eez
You must think if you can of a l k her pla
I can t ru out like a run et heese.
Ch O don t you emember the old campai n
hen you tol the p t and I t yourself down,
And awa b th side of th wall ou l ed?
'T a when w had captured Na os town
Ph Ah, ll I emembe ! but what f that?
it is quite anoth affair to-day
For then I wa you and th n I could teal
nd o er m elf I possessed full swa
And then non gua ded my teps, but I
W free where er I hose to fl
Whil t n w very alert and t eet
Armed men w th rms re stat ed about
W tchin w th ea e that I steal ot out
And th e t th gat ou ma see those
two
W ting w th p ts t spit m through,
Like cat that is running awa w th the
meat
Ch Well b t n w be qui kl haping
Some ontri c for escaping
Morning b eaks, my hon bee
Ph. Then th best that I ca think f,
is to gnaw these meshes throu h
Ma Dictynna q een fhu t rs,
pa don m th leed I do.
Ch Spoken lik man whose efforts
will sal t on goal nsue
Ply your j w th l dy
Ph. Th r f gnawn th m throu h compl t l
—Ah b t d t raise shout
W must use th greatest ca t on,
lest Bd l cleon find us out
Ch Fear not fear not f h peak,
H shall gnaw his heart nd seek
For h s life to run amain
We w ll quickl make him learn
Ne ermore again to spurn
Th hol statutes of the Twain.
So now to the wind w lst th cord
and tw e t securel our limbs around
W th all Di peithes fil our soul,
then let ourself cle erly down to the ground
Ph But suppose the catch me suspended here
and hoist me up by the l ne aga n,
And angle me into the house once mor
say what ye will do to d l er me then
Ch Our hearts of oak we ll summon to aid
and all g e battle at once for you.
'Twere va n to attempt to detain you more
such wond rful feats we ar going to do.
Ph Thus th w ll I do, confid ng in you
nd if anythin happens to me I implore
That you take me up and bewa l my fate
nd bury me under th court house floor
Ch O n th ng nothin will *happen to you*
keep up old com ade your heart and h pe
F rst b eathe a pra er to our father s gods
then l t yourself down by the tru ty rope
Ph O Lycus, nei hbour and hero and lord!
thou lo est th selfsame plea ures as I
D after day we both enjoy
the suppliant tears and h wail ng cry
Thou camest here thine abod to fix
on pu pose to l ten to sound so sweet
The onl he o of ll that deign
b the mou ne s side to ume his seat
O pity thin old familia f end
O save m and uccour m Power Divine!
And ne min will I d m needs
by the osi r matt that guards th shrine
Bd Get up g t p
Bdelycleon suddenly reappears and wakes up the d mbers g s rves
So Wh what s n th wind?
Bd Som oice seem ci clin m ro nd and round
S I the old man l ppin wa thro a hole?
Bd No, by Zeus, but he l ts himself d wn to the
g ound
T ed on t the ope
So Your famou wret h!
what won t you be quiet and n t com down?
Bd Climb up b the ther w dow till
nd wallop him well w th the harvest crown.
I wa rant h ll peedil back tern first
when he thrashed with the branch of utumnal
fruits.
Ph Help h lp! all those who e e propose
this yea t busy th msel es w th suits.
Smicythion help! T sades, h lp!
Ph redeipnus, Chrem n th fr y be n
O n w o e er assist you f nd
before I m carried away within
Ch Wh r f re mbers, whe ef re lumbers,
that esentment n our breast
Such when ra h assailant
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Ph Tis my son but don t be bawling
for he s slumbering now at ease
There upon the roof before you
drop your tone a little please
Ch What s his object idle trifler
that he does such things as these?
What s the motive he pretends?

Bd. Can t we now without this outcry
and this fierce denunciation,
Come to peaceful terms together
terms of reconciliation?
Ch. Terms with thee thou people hater
and with Brasidas, thou traitor
Hand and glove! You who dare
Woolly fringed Clothes to wear
Yes and show Beard and hair
Left t grow E erywhere.
Bd. O b Zeus, I'd really liefer
drop my father al ogether
Than endure these daily conflicts,
buffeting with wa es and wrath r
Ch. Why as yet you re hardly entered
on th parsley and the rue
That we'll just throw in, a sample
four three-quart words for you.)
Now yo care not wait little,
till the prosecutor trounce you,
Stam out these selfsame charges,
and *conspirator* denounce ou.
Bd. O by all the gods I ask you,
will ye ne er go away?
Are ye qu e resol ed to linger
thwacked and thwacking all the da ?
Ch. Never more Will I whil
Ther s grain Left of me
Lea your door Traitor vile
Bent to gain *Tyranny*
Bd. Ay Conspiracy and "Tyrant,
These with you are al in all,
Whatsoe er is brought before you,
be the matter great or small.
E erywhere t e name of Tyrant,
now for fifty years unknown,
Is than cheap salt fish at Athens
commoner a d cheaper grown.
E erywhere bout the market
t is bandied to and fro
If you wish a basse to purchase,
and without a pilchard go,
Straight the man who sells the pilchards
grumbles from his stall hard by
Here is plainly one that caters
with a ew to Tyranny "
If leek, besides, you order
relish for your sprats perchance
Says the potherb-girl directly
eyeing you with looks askance
Leeks indeed! and leeks I prithee!
what, with T rann in view?
Athens must be taxed, you fancy
relish to supply for yo "
Xa. Even so naughty damsel
yesternoon observed to me
Just because I said her manners
were little bit too free,
She supposed that I was wishing
Hippias's Tyranny
Bd. Ay by charges such as these
our litigious friends they please.
Now because I'd ha e my father
(quitting all this toil and strife
This up-early false-sw orning
tro blesome litigious life)
Li e a life of ease and splendour
li e like Morychus, you see
Straight I m charged with T rant leanings,
charged with foul conspiracy
Ph. Yes, by Zeus, and very justly
Not for pigeon s milk in store
I the pleasant lif would barter
which you let me lead no more
Nought I care for eels and rayfish
daintier food to me would seem
Just a littl tiny lawsuit
dished and stuffed in ts steam.
Bd. Yes, for that s the sort of dainty
you, by Zeus, have lo ed so long
Yet I think I'll soon convince you
that our mod of lif is wrong
If you can but once be silent
and to what I say give heed.
Ph. I am wrong to be a dicast!
Bd. Laughed to utter scorn indeed,
Mocked by men you all but worship,
for you can t their treachery see,
You re a slave and yet don t know it.
Ph. Name not slavery to me
I m lord of all, I tell you.
Bd. You re the veriest drudge I ow
Thinking that you re lord of all. For
come my father teach us now
If you reap th fruits of H as,
what the benefit to you?
Ph. Willingly Let these be umpi es.
Bd. I'll accept their judgement too.
Now then al at once release him.
Ph. And besides a sword supply
If in this dispute I m worsted,
here upon this sword I'll die
Bd. But suppose you won t t eir final
(what s the phrase) award obey?
Ph. May I never drink thereafter
pure and neat good fortune s—pay
Ch. Now must the champion, going
Out of our school, be showing
Keen wit and genius new
Bd. Bring forth my memorandum book
brin forth my desk to write in.
I'll quickly show you what you lik
if that s your style of fighting
Ch. In quit another fashion
To a ght this youth ca do.
Stern is th strif and anxious
For all our earthly good,
If he intends to conquer
Which Hea en forfend he should.
Bd. Now I'll observe his arguments,
and take a not of each.
Ph. What would you sa if he to-day
should mak the conq erin speech?
Ch. Ah! should that mischance befal us,

Now protruding now protruding
Comes the fierce and dreadful sting
Which we wield for punishing
Children hold these garments for us
then away with all your speed
Shout and run and bawl to Cleon
tell him of this direful deed
Bid him quickly hither fly
As against a city hater
And a traitor doomed to die
One who actually proposes
That we should no lawsuits try *Exit* BOYS
Bd (*entering*) Listen worthy sirs to reason
goodness! don t keep screaming so
Ch Scream! we ll scream as high as heaven
Bd I don t intend to let him go
Ch These be frightful things to see!
This is open *tyranny*!
Rouse the State! Rouse the great
God abhorred Sneak Theorus!
And whoe er Else is there
Fawning lord Ruling o er us
Xa Heracles! they ve stings beside them!
Master master don t you see?
Bd Ay which slew the son of Gorgias
Philip with their sharp decree
Ch You we ll also slay directly!
Wheel about him everyone
Draw your stings and all together
in upon the fellow run
Close your ranks collect your forces
brimming full of rage and hate
He shall know the sort of wasps nest
he has dared to irritate
Xa Now with such as these to combat
is by Zeus a serious thing
Verily I quake and tremble
but to look upon their sting
Ch Let him go! Loose your hold!
If you don t I declare
You shall bless Tortoise backs
For the shells Which they wear
Ph On then on my fellow dicasts
brother wasps of heart severe
Some fly in with angry buzzings
and attack them in the rear
Some surround them in a ring and
both their eyes and fingers sting
Bd Ho there! Midas! Phryx! Masyntias!
hither! hither! haste to me!
Take my father guard him safely
suffer none to set him free
Else you both shall lunch off nothing
clapped in fetters strong and stout
There s a sound of many fig leaves
(well I know it) buzzed about
Ch This shall stand infixed within you
if you will not let him go
Ph Mighty Cecrops! King and hero!
Dragon born and shaped below
Wilt thou let these rude barbarians
vex and maul me at their pleasure
Me who heretofore have made them
weep in full imperial measure?
Ch Truly of abundant evils
age is evermore the source
Only see how these two scoundrels
hold their ancient lord perforce
Clean forgetting how aforetime
he their daily wants supplied
Bought them little sleeveless jackets
bought them caps and coats of hide
Clean forgetting all the kindness
shown their feet in wintry weather
How from chill and cold he kept them
ah! but these have altogether
Banished from their eyes the reverence
owing to those dear old brogues
Ph *Won t you even now unhand me*
shameless villain worst of rogues?
When the grapes I caught you stealing
O remember if you can
How I tied you to the olive
and I flogged you like a man
So that all beheld with envy
but a grateful soul you lack!
Oh unhand me you and you
at once before my son come back.
Ch But a famous retribution
ye for this shall undergo
One that will not lag nor linger
so that ye betimes shall know
Know the mood of angry tempered
righteous mustard glancing men

Here BDELYCLEON *suddenly issues from the house followed by* XANTHIAS *and* SOSIAS *the former armed with a stick the latter carrying an apparatus for smoking out wasps*

Bd Beat them Xanthias from the door way
beat the wasps away again
Xa That I will sir
Bd Fume them Sosias
drive the smoke in dense and thick
Shoo there shoo! be off confound you
At them Xanthias with the stick!
Smoke them Sosias smoke infusing
Aeschines Selartius son
So So then we at last were going
as it seems to make you run
Bd But you never would have managed
thus to beat them off with ease
Had it chanced that they had eaten
of the songs of Philocles
Ch Creeping o er us creeping o er us
Here at least the poor can see
Stealthy creeping *tyranny*!
If you from the laws debar us
which the city has ordained
You a curly haired Amynias
you a rascal double grained
Not by words of wit persuading
Not for weighty reasons shown
But because forsooth you *will* it
Like an autocrat alone

Is just the su cess of a tail that s wa hed
gon back to its filth and its slo enliness.
Ph. B t the m est d pleasantest pa t of it all
is this, which I d wholly f rgotten to say
T hen th m fee in m wallet I come
r t rni home t the close of the day
Oh then hat a wel-ome I g t f t sake
m da ght r the darling is foremost of all,
A she washes my feet nd anoint them with care
and abo th m sh toops, and a k ss l ts fall
Till t last b th p tty Papas of her t ngue
she a les withal my three-obol wa
Then m dear little w f she set on th board
nc manchets of bread in temptin array
And cosl takin a seat by my sid
with lo ent e ty con trai s m to feed
I beseech you tast this, I implore you try that
This, this I d light in, and e er may I eed
T look to yourself and your pantl r a s rub
ho, when I ask him m breakfa t to set
Keeps umbling and m rmurin u der his breath
No! no! if he hast t a manchet t get
Lo here my d fence fr m the ev l of life
m armour f proof, m impre nabl hi ld
A d hat if you pour me n liquor t drink,
I ther s an old Ass, full of wine that I w eld
And I tilt him, and pou for m self and mbibe
whilst sturd old J k, a bumper I drain
Lets fl t your goblet bra f contempt
mi hty nd ma terful snort of disd in
I this ta fine domin on of m e?
I it less tha the empire f Zeus?
Why th ery same phrases, so grand and
di ine,
For me as for H m, are in use
For when we a e ram loud and hi h
In stormy tumultuous din
O Lord! O Zeus! sa the passers by
How thunders the Court withi !"
Th wealthy and great wh n m li ht
nines glare
Turn pal and si k d mutt r a prayer
You fear me too I protest ou d
Yes, yes, by Demeter I ow tis true.
B t han me f I m afraid of ou.
Ch. In er no, I ever
Ha e heard so clea and clever
And eloq t a speech—
Ph. A h thought h d teal m grapes,
and pl k them undef nded
For ll h k ew that I m n thi
pa t la l spl d d
Ch. N top, he m tted
B t he dul w t through each.
I waxed in size t hea him
Till with ecst sy possessed
Methought I sat judging
I th Island of the Blest
Ph. See how uneasily h stands,
and gapes, nd hifts his gr und
I arrant sir befor I d e
you'll look like beat hound

Ch. You must now young man be
seek r
E ery turn and e ery tw st
Wh ch ca your d fence ass t
To a youth aga nst me speakin
M ne s a heart t s hard to tender
(So you ll find it) soft and tend r
And therefore unless you can peak to the point
you must look for a mill tone hand and good
Fresh hewn from the rock to sh er nd shock
the unyi elding grit of my resolute mood
Bd. H rd were the ta k and shre d the tent
for a Comedy poet all too great
To attempt to heal an in eterate old
d sease rained i th heart of the state
Yet O dread Cron des, Father and Lord
Ph. St p stop, don t ta k in that father me way
Con inc me at once that I m onl a sla
or else I protest you shall die thi day
Albeit I then must e er bsta n
from the hol flesh of the v ctims sla n
Bd. Then listen my own little pet P pa,
nd smooth your brow from its frowns again.
And ot with pebbles precisel ranged
but roughly thus on your fin ers count
The tribute paid by the ubject States,
nd just consider its whole amount
And then, in addition to this, compute
the many taxes and one per-cents,
The fees and the fi es, d the sil er mines,
the markets nd harbours and sales and rents.
If ou take the t tal result of th lot
twill reach two thousand t lents or near
And next put d wn the Just ces pay
and reckon the sums th y receive a year
Six thousand Just ces, count them through,
there dwell o more n the land as yet
One hundred and fifty talents a year
I th k you will find is all they get
Ph. Then n t one t the of our come goes
to f rnish f rth the Justices pay
Bd. No, certainl not
Ph. And what becomes
of a l th rest f the revenue pray?
Bd. Why bless you, it goes t the pockets f those
"To the rabble f Ath ns I'll er be true
I ll al ays battle way for th mob"
O father my father t s win to you
By such small phrases as these cajoled,
ou lift th m o er oursel es to reign
And then bel e me th y soon contrive
some fift talents i bribes to gain
Extortin th m out of the subject states,
by host le menace nd angry frown
"Hand er th y sa th tribute pay
o lse th th nders shall cru h your town"
You joy th while t the mnants ul
th trott rs and t ps f our power to gnaw
So wh n u kn wing cute allies
the est th scum of the Populace saw
On ote box pe and on n thing ess dine
a d ma ked how lanky and lean ye grow

Our old troop were nothing worth
In the streets with ribald mirth
Idle boys would dotards call us
Fit for nought but olive bearing
Shrivelled husks of counter swearing
O friend upon whom it devolves to plead
the cause of our Sovereign Power to-day
Now show us your best now bring to the test
each trick that an eloquent tongue can play
Ph Away away like a racer gay
I start at once from the head of the lists
To prove that no kinglier power than ours
in any part of the world exists
Is there any creature on earth more blest
more feared and petted from day to day
Or that leads a happier pleasanter life
than a Justice of Athens though old and grey?
For first when rising from bed in the morn
to the criminal Court betimes I trudge
Great six foot fellows are there at the rails
in anxious haste to salute their Judge
And the delicate hand which has dipped so deep
in the public purse he claps into mine
And he bows before me and makes his prayer
and softens his voice to a pitiful whine
O pity me pity me Sire he cries
if you ever indulged your longing for pelf
When you managed the mess on a far campaign
or served some office of state yourself
The man would never have heard my name
if he had not been tried and acquitted before
Bd (*writing*) I ll take a note of the point you make
that suppliant fellows your grace implore
Ph So when they have begged and implored me enough
and my angry temper is wiped away
I enter in and I take my seat
and then I do none of the things I say
I hear them utter all sorts of cries
design d expressly to win my grace
What won t they utter what don t they urge
to coax a Justice who tries their case?
Some vow they are needy and friendless men
and over their poverty wail and whine
And reel on up hardships false and true
till he makes them out to be equal to mine
Some tell us a legend of days gone by
or a joke from Aesop witty and sage
Or jest and banter to make me laugh
that so I may doff my terrible rage
And if all this fails and I stand unmoved
he leads by the hand his little ones near
He brings his girls and he brings his boys
and I the Judge am composed to hear
They huddle together with piteous bleats
whil trembling above them he prays to me
Prays as to a God his accounts to pass
to give *him a quittance and leave him free*
If thou lovest a bleating male of the flock
O lend thine ear to this boy of mine
Or pity this sweet little delicate girl
if thy soul d lights in the squeaking of swine

So then we relax the pitch of our wrath
and screw it down to a peg more low
Is this not a fine dominion of mine
a derision of wealth with its pride and show?
Bd (*Writing*) A cond point for my note book that
A derision of wealth with its show and its pride
Go on to mention the good you get
by your empire of Hellas so vast and wide
Ph Tis ours to inspect the Athenian youths
when we enter their names on the rolls of men
And if ever Oeagrus gets into a suit
be sure that he ll never get out again
Till he give us a speech from his Niobe part
selecting the best and the liveliest one
And then if a piper gain his cause
he pays us our price for the kindness done
By piping a tune with his mouth band on
quick march as out of the Court we go
And what if a father by will to a friend
his daughter and heiress bequeath and bestow
We care not a rap for the Will or the cap
which is there on the seal so grand and sedate
We bid them begone and be hanged and ourselve
take charge of the girl and her worthy estate
And we give her away to whoever we choo e
to whoever may chance to persuade us y t we
Whilst other officials must pass an account
alone from control and accounting are free
Bd Ay that and that only of all you have said
I own is a privilege lucky and rare
But uncapping the seal of the heiress s will
seems rather a shabby and doubtful affai
Ph And if ever the Council or People have got
a knotty and difficult case to decide
They pass a decree for the culprits to go
to the able and popular Courts to be tried
Evathlus and Hel the loser of shields
the fawning the great Cowardonymus say
They ll always be fighting away for the mob
the people of Athens they ll never betray
And none in the People a measure can pass
unless he propose that the Courts shall be free
Dismissed and discharged for the rest of the day
when once we have settled a single decree
Yea Cleon the Bawler and Brawler himself
at us and us only to nibble forbears
And sweeps off the flies that annoy us and still
with a igilant hand for our dignity cares
You never have shown such attention as this
or displayed such a zeal in your father s affairs
Yet Theorus a statesman as noble and grand
as lordly Euphemius runs at our call
And whips out a sponge from his bottle and stoops
to black and to polish the shoes of us all
Such such is the glory the joy the renown
from which you desire to retain and withhold me
And this you will show this Empire of mine
to be bondage and slavery merely you told me
Bd Ay chatter your fill you ll cease before long
and then I will show that your boasted success

Is just the success of a tail that 's washed
gone back to its filth and its slovenliness.
Ph. But the nicest and pleasantest part of it all
is this, which I'd wholly forgotten to say,
'Tis when with my fee in my wallet I come
returning home at the close of the day
O then what a welcome I get for its sake
my daughter, the darling, is foremost of all,
And she washes my feet and anoints them with care
and above them she stoops, and a kiss lets fall,
Till at last by the pretty Papas of her tongue
she angles withal my three-obol away
Then my dear little wife, she sets on the board
nice manchets of bread in a tempting array
And cosily takes a seat by my side,
with loving entreaty constrains me to feed
"I beseech you taste this, I implore you try that."
This, this I delight in, and never may I need
To look to yourself and your pantler, a scrub
who, whenever I ask him my breakfast to set,
Keeps grumbling and murmuring under his breath.
No! no! if he haste not a manchet to get,
Lo here my defence from the evils of life
my armour of proof, my impregnable shield
And what if you pour me no liquor to drink,
yet here 's an old Ass, full of wine, that I wield,
And I tilt him, and pour for myself, and imbibe
whilst sturdy old Jack, as a bumper I drain,
Lets fly at our goblet a bray of contempt
a mighty and masterful snort of disdain.
Is this not a fine dominion of mine?
Is it less than the empire of Zeus?
Why the very same phrases, so grand and
divine,
For me as for Him, are in use.
For when we are raving loud and high
In stormy tumultuous din,
"O Lord! O Zeus!" say the passers-by
How thunders the Court within!"
The wealthy and great when my lightnings glare,
Turn pale and sick, and to utter a prayer
You fear me too I protest you do
Yes, yes, by Demeter I vow 'tis true.
But hang me if I am afraid of you.
Ch. I never no, I never
Have heard so clear and clever
And eloquent a speech—
Ph. Ah! he thought he'd steal my grapes,
and pluck them undefended,
For well he knew that I am in this
particularly splendid.
Ch. No point be omitted.
But he did went through each.
I waxed in size to hear him
Till with ecstasy possessed
Methought I sat judging
In the Islands of the Blest.
Ph. See how uneasy he stands,
and gapes, and shifts his ground.
I warrant, sir, before I've done,
you'll look like a beaten hound.
Ch. You must now, young man, be seeking
Every turn and every twist
Which can your defence assist
To a youth against me speaking
Mine 's a heart 'tis hard to render
(So you'll find it) soft and tender
And therefore unless you can speak to the point
you must look for a millstone handy and good
Fresh hewn from the rock, to shiver and shock
the unyielding grit of my resolute mood.
Bd. Hard were the task, and shrewd the intent,
for a Comedy poet all too great
To attempt to heal an inveterate old
disease engrained in the heart of the state
Yet, O dread Cronides, Father and Lord
Ph. Stop, stop, don't talk in that father me way
Convince me at once that I'm only a slave,
or else I protest you shall die this day
Albeit I then must ever abstain
from the holy flesh of the victims slain.
Bd. Then listen my own little pet Papa,
and smooth your brow from its frowns again.
And not with pebbles precisely ranged,
but roughly thus on your fingers count
The tribute paid by the subject States,
and just consider its whole amount
And then, in addition to this, compute
the many taxes and one per-cents,
The fees and the fines, and the silver mines,
the markets and harbours and sales and rents.
If you take the total result of the lot
'twill reach two thousand talents or near
And next put down the Justices' pay
and reckon the sums they receive a year
Six thousand Justices, count them through,
there dwell no more in the land as yet
One hundred and fifty talents a year
I think you will find is all they get.
Ph. Then not one tithe of our income goes
to furnish forth the Justices' pay
Bd. No, certainly not.
Ph. And what becomes
of all the rest of the revenue, pray?
Bd. Why bless you, it goes to the pockets of those
"To the rabble of Athens I'll ever be true,
I'll always battle away for the mob."
O father, my father, 'tis owing to you
By such small phrases as these cajoled,
you lift them over yourselves to reign.
And then, believe me, they soon contrive
some fifty talents in bribes to gain,
Extorting them out of the subject States,
by hostile menace and angry frown
Hand over," they say, "the tribute pay
or else my thunders shall crush your town."
You joy the while at the remnants vile
the trotters and tips of your power to gnaw
So when our knowing acute allies
the rest, the scum of the Populace, saw
On a vote-box pine, and on nothing grow dine
and marked how lanky and lean ye grow

Our old troop were nothing worth
In the streets with ribald mirth
Idle boys would dotards call us
Fit for nought but olive bearing
Shrivelled husks of counter swearing
O friend upon whom it devolves to plead
the cause of our Sovereign Power to-day
Now show us your best now bring to the test
each trick that an eloquent tongue can play
Ph Away away *like a racer gay*
I start at once from the head of the lists
To prove that no kinglier power than ours
in any part of the world exists
Is there any creature on earth more blest
more feared and petted from day to day
Or that leads a happier pleasanter life
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to the criminal Court betimes I trudge
Great six foot fellows are there at the rails
in anxious haste to salute their Judge
And the delicate hand which has dipped so deep
in the public purse he claps into mine
And he bows before me and makes his prayer
and softens his voice to a pitiful whine
O pity me pity me Sire he cries
if you ever indulged your longing for pelf
When you *managed the mess on a far campaign*
or served some office of state yourself
The man would never have heard my name
if he had not been tried and acquitted before
Bd (writing) I ll take a note of the point you make
that suppliant fellows your grace implore
Ph So when they have begged and implored me enough
and my angry temper is wiped away
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and then I do none of the things I say
I hear them utter all sorts of cries
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What won t they utter what don t they urge
to coax a Justice who tries their case?
Some vow *they are needy and friendless men*
and over their poverty wail and whine
And reel on up hardships false and true
till he makes them out to be equal to mine
Some tell us a legend of days gone by
or a joke from Aesop witty and sage
Or jest and banter to make me laugh
that so I may doff my terrible rage
And if all this fails and I stand unmoved
he leads by the hand his little ones near
He brings his girls and he brings his boys
and I the Judge am composed to hear
They huddle together with piteous bleats
while trembling above them he prays to me
Prays as to a God his accounts to pass
to give him a quittance *and leave him free*
If thou lovest a bleating male of the flock
O lend thine ear to this boy of mine
Or pity this sweet little delicate girl
if thy soul delights in the squeaking of swine

So then we relax the pitch of our wrath
and screw it down to a peg more low
Is this not a fine dominion of mine
a derision of wealth with its pride and show?
Bd (*Writing*) A second point for my note book that
A derision of wealth with its show and its pride
Go on to mention the good you get
by your empire of Hellas so vast and wide
Ph Tis ours to inspect the Athenian youths
when we enter their names on the rolls of men
And if ever Oeagrus gets into a suit
be sure that he ll never get out again
Till he give us a speech from his Niobe part
selecting the best and the liveliest one.
And then if a piper gain his cause
he pays us our price fo the kindness done
By piping a tune with his mouth band on
quick march as out of the Court we go
And what if a father by will to a friend
his daughter and heiress bequeath and bestow
We care not a rap for the Will or the cap
which is there on the seal so grand and sedate
We bid them begone and be hanged and ourselve
take charge of the girl and her worthy estate
And we give her away to whoever we choo
to whoever may chance to persuade us y t we
Whilst other officials must pass an account
alone from control and accounting are free.
Bd Ay that and that only of all you have said
I own is a privilege lucky and rare
But uncapping the seal of the heiress s will
seems rather a shabby and doubtful affair
Ph And if ever the Council or People have got
a knotty and difficult case to decide
They pass a decree for the culprits to go
to the able and popular Courts to be tried
Evathlus and Hel the loser of shields
the fawning the great Cowardony mus say
They ll always be fighting away for the mob
the people of Athens they ll never betray
And none in the People a measure can pass
unless he propose that the Courts shall be free
Dismissed and discharged for the rest of the day
when once we have settled a single decree
Yea Cleon the Bawler and Brawler himself
at us and us only to nibble forbears
And sweeps off the flies that annoy us and still
with a vigilant hand for our dignity cares
You never have shown such attention as this
or displayed such a zeal in your father s affairs
Yet Theorus a statesman as noble and grand
as lordly Euphemius runs at our call
And whips out a sponge from his bottle and stoops
to black and to polish the shoes of us all
Such such is the glory the joy the renown
from which you desire to retain and withhold me
And this you will show this Empire of mine
to be bondage and slavery merely you told me
Bd Ay chatter your fill you will cease before long
and then I will show that your boasted success

A better and wiser man
By our advice he'll live hereafter

Ph. O misery! O misery!

Bd. O father wh[at] dolorous cry?

Ph. Talk not of things like these to me!
These are my pleasures, there would I be
Where the Usher cries
"Who has not voted? let him arise."
And O that the last of the voting band
By the verdict-box I could take my stand.
On, on, my soul! why, where is she gone?
Hah! by your leave, my shadowy one!
Zounds, if I catch when in Court I'm sitting
Cleon again a theft committing!

Bd. O father, father, by the Gods comply.

Ph. Comply with what? name any wish, save one.

Bd. Save what, I prithee?

Ph. Not to judge: but that
Hades shall settle ere my soul comply.

Bd. Well but if these are really your delights,
Why go There? why not remain at home
And sit and judge among your household here?

Ph. Fool! judge what?

Bd. The same as There you do.
Suppose you catch your housemaid on the sly
Opening the door: fine her for that one drachma.
That's what you did at every sitting There.
And very aptly if the morning's fine,
You'll fine your culprits, sitting in the sun.
If snow, sit at your judgements by the fire
When it rains on; and—though you keep till midday
No Archon here will close the door against you.

Ph. Hah! I like that.

Bd. And then, however long
A pleader proses on, no need to fear
Worrying yourself (and the prisoner too)

Ph. But do you really think that I can judge
As well as now whilst eating and digesting?

Bd. As well? much better. When there's reckless swearing
Don't people say what time and thought and trouble
It took the judges to digest the case?

Ph. I'm giving in. But you've not told me yet
How I'm to get my pay.

Bd. I'll pay you.

Ph. Good.
Then I shall have mine to myself, alone.
For once Lysistratus, that funny fool,
Played me the scurviest trick. We'd got one drachma
Betwixt us two: he changed it at the fish-stall
Then laid me down three mullet scales: and I,
I thought them obols, popped them in my mouth.
O the vile smell! O la! I spat them out
And collared him.

Bd. And what said he?

Ph. The rascal.
He said I'd got the stomach of a cock.
You'll soon digest hard cash, he says, says he.

Bd. Then there again you'll get a great advantage.

Ph. Ay ay, that's something: let's begin at once.

Bd. Then stop a moment whilst I fetch the traps.
Exit

Ph. See here now how the oracles come true.
Oft have I heard it said that the Athenians
One day would try their lawsuits in their homes,
That each would have a little Court-let built
For his own use, in his own porch, before
His entrance, like a shrine of Hecate.

Bd. (*bringing in with a quantity of judicial properties*)
Now then I hope you're satisfied. I've brought
All that I promised, and a lot besides.
See here I'll hang this vessel on a peg
In case you want it as the suit proceeds.

Ph. Now that I call extremely kind and thoughtful,
And wondrous handy for an old man's needs.

Bd. And here's a fire, and gruel set beside it,
All ready when you want it.

Ph. Good again.
Now if I'm feverish I shan't lose my pay
For here I'll sit, and sip my gruel too.
But why in the world have ye brought me out the cock?

Bd. To wake you, father, crowing over head
In case you're dozing whilst a prisoner pleads.

Ph. One thing I miss, and only one.

Bd. What's that?

Ph. If you could somehow fetch the shrine of Lycus!

Bd. Here then it is, and here's the king in person.

Ph. O hero lord, how stern you are to see!

Bd. Almost, methinks, like our—Cleonymus.

Xa. Ay, and in truth the hero has no shield!

Bd. If you got seated sooner, I should sooner
Call a suit on.

Ph. Call on, I've sat for ages.

Bd. Let's see what matter shall I bring on first?
Who's been in mischief of the household here?
That careless Thratta now, she charred the pitcher.

Ph. O stop, for goodness sake! you've all but killed me.
What! call a suit on with no railing here,
Always the first of all our sacred things?

Bd. No more there is, by Zeus.

Ph. I'll run myself
And scare out whatever comes to hand. *Exit*

Bd. Heyday! where now? The strange infatuation!
Enter XANTHIAS.

Xa. Pshaw! rot the dog! To keep a cur like this!

Bd. What's happened now?

Xa. Why, has not Labes here
Got to the kitchen safe, and grabbed a cheese,
A rich Sicilian cheese, and bolted it?

Bd. Then that's the first indictment we'll bring on
Before my father: you shall prosecute.

Xa. Thank you, not I. This other Cur declares
If there's a charge, he'll prosecute with pleasure.

Bd. Bring them both here.

Xa. Yes, yes, sir, so I will.
Exit
Enter PHILOCLEON.

They count you all as a Connas s vote
and ever and ever on these bestow
Wines cheeses necklaces sesamè fruit
and jars of pickle and pots of honey
Rugs cushions and mantles and cups and crowns
and health and vigour and lots of money
Whilst *you!* from out of the broad domain
for which on the land and the wave you toiled
None gives you so much as a garlic head
to flavour the dish when your sprats are boiled
Ph That s true no doubt for I just sent out
and bought myself from Eucharides three
But you wear me away by your long delay
in proving my bondage and slavery
Bd Why *is* it not slavery pure and neat
when these (themselves and their parasites too)
Are all in receipt of their pay God wots
as high officials of state whilst you
Must thankful be for your obols three
those obols which ye yourselves have won
In the battle s roar by sea and by shore
mid sieges and miseries many a one
But O what throttles me most of all
is this that under constraint you go
When some young dissolute spark comes in
some son of a Chaereas straddling—so
With his legs apart and his body poised
and a mincing soft effeminate air
And bids you Justices one and all
betimes in the morn to the Court repair
For that any who after the signal come
shall lose and forfeit their obols three
Yet come as late as he choose himself
he pockets his drachma Counsel s fee
And then if a culprit give him a bribe
he gets his fellow the job to share
And into each other s hands they play
and manage together the suit to square
Just like two men at a saw they work
and one keeps pulling and one gives way
While you at the Treasurer stare and gape
and never observe the tricks they play
Ph Is *that* what they do! O can it be true!
Ah me the depths of my being are stirred
Your statements shake my soul and I feel
I know not how at the things I ve heard
Bd And just consider when you and all
might revel in affluence free as air
How these same demagogues wheel you round
and cabin and coop you I know not where
And you the lord of such countless towns
from Pontus to Sardo nought obtain
Save this poor pittance you earn and this
they dole you in driblets grain by grain
As though they were dropping oil from wool
as much forsooth as will life sustain
They *mean* you all to be poor and gaunt
and I ll tell you father the reason why
They want you to know your keeper s hand
and then if he hiss you on to fly
At some helpless foe away you go
with eager vehemence ready and rough
Since if they wished to maintain you well
the way to do it were plain enough.
A thousand cities our rule obey
a thousand cities their tribute pay
Allot them twenty Athenians each
to feed and nourish from day to day
And twice ten thousand citizens there
are living immersed in dishes of hare
With creams and beestings and sumptuous fare
and garlands and coronals everywhere
Enjoying a fate that is worthy the state
and worthy the trophy on Marathon plain.
Whilst now like gleaners ye all are fain
to follow along in the paymaster s train
Ph O what can this strange sensation mean
this numbness that over my hand is stealing?
My arm no longer can hold the sword
I yield unmanned to a womanish feeling
Bd Let a panic possess them they re ready to give
Euboea at once for the State to divide
And engage to supply for every man
full fifty bushels of wheat beside
But five poor bushels of barley each
is all that you ever obtained in fact
And that doled out by the quart while first
they worry you under the Alien Act
And therefore it was that I locked you away
To keep you in ease unwilling that these
With empty mouthings your age should bilk
And now I offer you here to day
Without any reserve whatever you please
Save only a draught of—Treasurer s milk
Ch Twas a very acute and intelligent man
whoever it was that happened to say
"Don t make up your mind till you ve heard both
sides
for now I protest you have gained the fray
Our staves of justice our angry mood
for ever and ever aside we lay
And we turn to talk to our old compeer
our choir companion of many a day
Don t be a fool give in give in
Nor too perverse and stubborn be
I would to Heaven my kith and kin
Would show the like regard for me
Some deity tis plain befriends
Your happy lot believe believe it
With open arms his aid he sends,
Do you with open arms receive it
Bd I ll give him whatever his years require
A basin of gruel and soft attire
And a good warm rug and a handmaid fair
To chafe and cherish his limbs with care
—But I can t like this that he stands so
mute
And speaks not a word nor regards my suit.
Ch 'Tis that his soberer thoughts review
The frenzy he indulged so long
And (what he would not yield to you)
He feels his former life was wrong
Perchance he ll now amend his plan
Unbend his age to mirth and laughter

Old gamecock? As he wink l he th ks so
Archon! H f llow hand m d n th vessel
Bd Reach it yourself I ll call m w tnesses
The witnesses for Labes, please stand forw rd!
Pot pestle grater braz r water ju
And ll the other scarred and cha red utensils.
(TO PHILOCLEON)
Good hea ens, sir finish there a d take your seat!
Ph I guess I ll f sh h m bef r I ve done
Bd What al a s hard and pitiless and that
To the prison s always keen to bite!
(TO LA E)
Up plead ca se what quite dumbf u ded? speak
Ph. Seem he g t notl g in th wo ld to say
Bd Nay ti a udden seizure such a o ce
Attacked Thuc dides wh n brought to trial
T to paral sis that stops his jaws
(T LABES)
O t of th way! I ll plead your cause myself.
O rs, ti hard t a gue f r a dog
Assailed by slander n e theless, I ll try
T good dog and drives way the wol es.
Ph A th ef I call him and con pirat
Bd A he the best and wo th est dog ali e
F t to take harg of any number o sh ep
Ph What use in that if h eat up the cheese?
Bd Use! why he fight you battles guard your doo
Th best dog altog ther If he filched
Y t O forg ve he nev r learnt the l r
Ph. I would to hea e he had ne r learned h s *letters*,
Then he d n t gi en u all this ti esom speech
B. N y nay si hea my witnesses, I beg
Grat r g t the bo a d speak well out
I kept th mess I sk yo answe plainly
Did ou not grate th poil betw n th soldiers?
H says he did
Ph. A b t l on he s l ng
B O h p ty upo poor toil ng souls.
Ou Labes her h l es on odd nd nds,
Bones, gri tle nd is lwa on th go
That othe Cur me e t v at h *me*
Sit by th hearth d wh n n bring ught in
A k for a h f h get none h bites.
Ph O m wh t ails me th t I g ow so soft!
Some ill foot I m nea ly gi g in
Bd O f besee h yo fathe show me p ty
Don t cru h m g te Wh a e h l ttle cubs?
Enter gro p f h ldre d ssed p pp es
Up l ttl w t hes, up d whimpers there
Plead fo our f th w p m pl e beseech
Ph (*deeply ff ted*) G t down get d ges d wn g t down
Bd I will
Y t that g t down I k w ha t k in
A man m n H w e I ll g t dow n
Ph D h ! this guzzling a n t the thing at all
Her was I hedding tea s, and se ms t me
Onl bec use I ha g ged myself w th gruel,
Bd Th w l h not g t off?
Ph 'Tis har l to know
Bd O take dear father take the kindl r turn
Here h ld th s vote then th l ut eyes dash by
To the F r Urn O father do acqu t h m
Ph No, no my boy I never learnt the lyre
Bd H re let me lead you round the handiest way
Ph Is this the Nearer?
Bd This is.
Ph In she goes.
Bd (*aside*) Duped as I l el acquits him by mistake!
(*al ud*) I ll do the counting
Ph Well how went the battle?
Bd We shall soon see O Labes you re acquitted!
Wh how no father?
Ph (*faintly*) Water gi e me water!
Bd Hold up sir do
Ph Just tell me only this,
Is h *r deed* acqu tted?
Bd Yes.
Ph I m done for
Bd Don t take it so to heart st nd up s r pray
Ph H w shall I bear this sin upon my soul?
A man acqu tted! What a aits me now?
Yet O great gods! I pray you pardon me
U w lled I did it not from natural be t
Bd And do t begrudge it f r I ll tend you well,
And take you father everywhere with me
To fea ts, to suppers, to the publ c games
Hen forth in pleasure you shall spend your days,
And no Hyperbolus delude and mock you
But go we in
Ph Yes, if you wish t now
Exeu t all but CHORUS

Chor s

Yea go r joic ng your own good way
Wh rever you path may be
But you ye numbe less myriads, stay
And list n the wh le to me
Bew re lest the truths I am go to say
Unheeded to earth sho ld fall
For th t w re the pa t f a fool to play
And not y u part a all.

Now *all* y people attend a d hear
f y lo e s mple and pe u e strain
F r no y o r poet w th r ht good w ll,
of yo spectat s, mu t eed compla n
Ye ha e w nged him much h protests, a bard
who had served y u often and well befo e
Partly *indeed* himself unseen
as u g others to please you more
W th the a t f a Eurycles, weird and w ld
he lo ed to di e i a stran ers breast
And pour from th e th ough a strang r s l ps
full many a spa kl g com cal jest
And partly at le gth in h s own true fo m
a he challenged his fate by h mself l e
And the Muses whose bridled mouth h drave
were ne er another s, were all his o n

Bd (*to* PHILOCLEON) Hallo what s this?
Ph Pig railings from the hearth
Bd Sacrilege eh?
Ph No but I d trounce some fellow
(As the phrase goes) even from the very hearth
So call away I m keen for passing sentence
Bd Then now I ll fetch the cause lists and the pleadings *Exit*
Ph O these delays! You weary and wear me out
I ve long been dying to commence my furrows
Bd (*re entering*) Now then!
Ph Call on
Bd Yes certainly
Ph And who
Is first in order?
Bd Dash it what a bother!
I quite forgot to bring the voting urns
Ph Goodness! where now?
Bd After the urns
Ph Don t trouble
I d thought of that I ve got these ladling bowls
Bd That s capital then now methinks we have
All that we want No there s no water piece
Ph Water piece quotha! pray what call you this?
Bd Well thought on father and with shrewd home wit
Ho there within! some person bring me out
A pan of coals and frankincense and myrtle
That so our business may commence with prayer
Ch We too as ye offer the prayer and wine
We too will call on the Powers Divine
To prosper the work begun
For the battle is over and done
And out of the fray and the strife to-day
Fair peace ye have nobly won
Bd Now hush all idle words and sounds profane
Ch O Pythian Phoebus bright Apollo deign
To speed this youth s design
Wrought here these gates before
And give us from our wanderings rest
And peace for evermore
The shout of Io Paean is raised
Bd Agyieus! my neighbour and hero and lord!
who dwellest in front of my vestibule gate
I pray thee be graciously pleased to accept
the rite that we new for my father create
O bend to a pliant and flexible mood
the stubborn and resolute oak of his will
And into his heart so crusty and tart
a trifle of honey for syrup instil
Endue him with sympathies wide
A sweet and humane disposition
Which leans to the side of the wretch that is tried
And weeps at a culprit s petition
From harshness and anger to turn
May it now be his constant endeavour
And out of his temper the stern
Sharp sting of the nettle to sever
Ch We in thy prayers combine and quite give in
To the new rule for the aforesaid reasons
Our heart has stood our friend
And loved you since we knew
That you affect the people more
Than other young men do
Enter XANTHIAS *with two persons as dogs*
Bd Is any Justice out there? let him enter
We shan t admit him when they ve once begun
Ph Where is the prisoner fellow? won t he catch it!
Bd O yes! attention! (*Reads the indictment*)
Cur of Cydathon
Hereby accuses Labes of Aexone
For that embezzling a Sicilian cheese
Alone he ate it Fine one fig tree collar
Ph Nay but a dog s death an he s once convicted
Bd Here stands to meet the charge the prisoner Labes
Ph O the vile wretch! O what a thievish look!
See how he grins and thinks to take me in
Where s the Accuser Cur of Cydathon?
Cur Bow!
Bd Here he stands
Xa Another Labes this
Good dog to yelp and lick the platters clean
Bd St! take your seat (*to* CUR)
Go up and prosecute
Ph Meanwhile I ll ladle out and sip my gruel
Xa Ye have heard the charge most honourable judges
I bring against him Scandalous the trick
He played us all me and the Sailor laddies
Alone in a corner in the dark he gorged
And munched and crunched and Siciliced the cheese!
Ph Pheugh! the thing s evident the brute this instant
Breathed in my face the filthiest whiff of cheese
O the foul skunk!
Xa And would not give me any
Not though I asked Yet can *he* be your friend
Who won t throw anything to Me the dog?
Ph Not give you any! No nor Me the state
The man s a regular scorcher (*burns his mouth*) like this gruel
Bd Come don t decide against us pray don t father
Before you ve heard both sides
Ph But my dear boy
The thing s self evident speaks for itself
Xa Don t let him off upon my life he is
The most lone eatingest dog that ever was
The brute went coasting round and round the mortar
And snapped up all the rind off all the cities
Ph And I ve no mortar even to mend my pitcher!
Xa So then be sure you punish him For why?
One bush they say can never keep two thieves
Lest I should bark and bark and yet get nothing
And if I do I ll never bark again
Ph Soh! soh!
Here s a nice string of accusations truly!
A rare thief of a man! You think so too

Mine was then a life of gl ry
ne er craven fear came o er me
E ery foeman quailed before me
As cross th m rry waters,
fast the ea er galle s bore me
T as not then our ma hood s test
Who can make a fine orat n?
Who is shrewd in lit gation?
It was, *Who ca rou the best?*
Therefor did we batter down
man a l ostile Median town.
And twas we wh for the nation
Gathe ed in the tribute pay
Which the young r ge eration
Merely steal away

You will find us ery wa plike
if y u sca us through and through
In our general mode of livin
and in all our hab ts too
First, if any rash assailant dare p ovoke us, can
ther be
Any creatu *more* indict e
more irasc ble than we?
Then e mana e ll our bus ess
in a waspish sort of way
Swarming to the Courts of J t ce
gathering in from day to d y
Many here the Eleven n ite us,
many wh re the Archon calls,
Many to the great Odeum many to the city walls
Ther we lay our heads togeth r
densely packed and stoopi g low
Like the grubs within their ells, w th
mo me t t emulous and slo
And for ways nd means in ge eral
we re uperlati ely good
Stu ging every man about us,
c fling th nce li elihood
Yet w e stin less dro es amongst us,
idl knaves who sit them st ll
Shrink fr m k a d to l, and labour
st p t hom and eat thei fill
Eat th g ld n tr bute h v
our indu trious care has wrou ht
This what extr mely g e es us,
that m who e fou ht
Should contri ur fees t pilfer
one wh for his nati land
Neve to this day had ca t
la ce or blister in his hand
Ther for let u for the future
pass a littl short decree
Whoso wear no st g shall n er carry off the
obols three"

Enter PHILOCLE N *and* BDELYCLEON

Ph No! No! I'll n v put this off alive
W th thi I wa a ra ed nd found my saf ty
I the m ason f the great north wind.
Bd You seem unwilli g to ccept a good.
Ph. 'T's ot e pedient no by Zeus t is not.
'Twas but the ot er day I gorged on sprats
And had to pay three obols to the fuller
Bd Try it at all e ents since once for all
Into my hand you have placed yourself for good
Ph What would you have me d ?
Bd Put off that cloak.
And wear th s mantle in a cloak like way
Ph Should I we beget and bring up ch ldren then
When here my son is bent on smothering me?
Bd Come take and put it on and don t keep
chattering
Ph Good hea ens! and what s this m sery of a
thi g?
Bd Some call it Persian others Caunacés.
Ph There! and I thought it a Thymaetian rug
Bd No wonder for you e never been to Sard s.
Else you d have kn w it now you don t
Ph Who? I?
No m re I do by Zeus it seemed to me
Most l ke an o erwrap of Morychus.
Bd Nay in Ecbatana they wea e this st ff
Ph What! have they wool guts in Ecbatana?
Bd Tut man they wea e it in their f reign looms
At wond ous cost this very article
Absorbed with ease a talent s weight of wool
Ph Why then, wool gatherer were its proper
name
In tead of Caunacés.
Bd Come take t take it
Stand st ll a l put it on
Ph O dear O dear
O what a sultry puff the brute breathed o er me!
Bd Quick, wrap it round you
Ph No, I won t *that s flat*
You had better wrap me in a stove at once.
Bd Come then I ll throw it rou d you
(*to the clo k*) You begone
Ph Do keep a flesh hook near
Bd A flesh hook! why?
Ph *To pull* me ut bef e I melt away
Bd N w off t once with those confounded shoes,
And *on* w th these Laconians, instantly
Ph What I my boy! I bring m self to wear
The hated foe s insufferable—clout ngs!
Bd Come sir insert your foot and step out firmly
In this Laconian
Ph 'Tis too bad it is,
To make a man set foot on hostil —leather
Bd Now for the other
Ph. O no, pray not that
I ve a toe there, a regular Lacon h ter
Bd There is no way but this.
Ph O lu kless I
Why I shan t have, to bless my age one—chilbl in
Bd Qu k faith r get th m on and then mo e
forwa d
Thus n an pulent swaggering so t f way
Ph Look then! observe my attitudes think
which
Of ll you opulent friends I walk most like
Bd Most like a pimpl band ed *round* with
garlic.

And thus he came to a height of fame
which none had ever achieved before
Yet waxed not high in his own conceit
nor ever an arrogant mind he bore
He never was found in the exercise ground
corrupting the boys he never complied
With the suit of some dissolute knave who loathed
that the vigilant lash of the bard should chide
His vile effeminate boylove No!
he kept to his purpose pure and high
That never the Muse whom he loved to use
the villainous trade of a bawd should ply
When first he began to exhibit plays
no paltry *men* for his mark he chose
He came in the mood of a Heracles forth
to grapple at once with the mightiest foes
In the very front of his bold career
with the jag toothed Monster he closed in fight
Though out of its fierce eyes flashed and flamed
the glare of Cynna s detestable light
And a hundred horrible sycophants tongues
were twining and flickering over its head
And a voice it had like the roar of a stream
which has just brought forth destruction and dread
And a Lamia s groin and a camel s loin
and foul as the smell of a seal it smelt
But He when the monstrous form he saw
no bribe he took and no fear he felt
For you he fought and for you he fights
and then last year with adventurous hand
He grappled besides with the Spectral Shapes
the Agues and Fevers that plagued our land
That loved in the darksome hours of night
to throttle fathers and grandsires choke
That laid them down on their restless beds
and against your quiet and peaceable folk
Kept welding together proofs and writs
and oath against oath till many a man
Sprang up distracted with wild affright
and off in haste to the Polemarch ran
Yet although such a champion as this ye had found
to purge your land from sorrow and shame
Ye played him false when to reap last year
the fruit of his novel designs he came
Which failing to see in their own true light
ye caused to fade and wither away
And yet with many a deep libation
invoking Bacchus he swears this day
That never a man since the world began
has witnessed a cleverer comedy
Yours is the shame that ye lacked the wit
its infinite merit at first to see
But none the less with the wise and skilled
the bard his accustomed praise will get
Though when he had distanced all his foes
his noble Play was at last upset

But O for the future my Masters pray
Show more regard for a genuine Bard
Who is ever inventing amusements new
And fresh discoveries all for you
Make much of his play and store it away
And into your wardrobe throw it
With the citrons sweet and if this you do,
Your clothes will be fragrant the whole year
through
With the volatile wit of the Poet

O of old renowned and strong
in the choral dance and song
In the deadly battle throng
And in this our one distinction
manliest we mankind among!
Ah but that was long ago
Those are days forever past
Now my hairs are whitening fast
Whiter than the swan they grow
Yet in these our embers low
still some youthful fires must glow
Better far our old world fashion
Better far our ancient truth
Than the curls and dissipation
Of your modern youth

Do *you* wonder O spectators
thus to see me spliced and braced
Like a wasp in form and figure
tapering inwards at the waist?
Why I am so what s the meaning
of this sharp and pointed stin
Easily I now will teach you
though you knew not anything
We on whom this stern appendage
this portentous tail is found
Are the genuine old Autochthons
native children of the ground
We the only true born Attics
of the staunch heroic breed
Many a time have fought for Athens
guarding her in hours of need
When with smoke and fire and rapine
forth the fierce Barbarian came
Eager to destroy our wasps nests,
smothering all the town in flame
Out at once we rushed to meet him
on with shield and spear we went
Fought the memorable battle
primed with fiery hardiment
Man to man we stood and grimly
gnawed for rage our under lips.
Hah! their arrows hail so densely
all the sun is in eclipse!
Yet we drove their ranks before us
ere the fall of eventide
As we closed an owl flew o er us
and the Gods were on our side!
Stung in jaw and cheek and eyebrow
fearfully they took to flight
We behind them we harpooning
at their slops with all our might
So that in barbarian countries
even now the people call
Attic wasps the best and bravest
yea the manliest tribe of all!

Once he t a elled to Pharsalus, our ambassador
t be
There a sol tary guest he
Stayed w th only th Penestae,
Comin from the tribe himself
the kindred tribe, of Penury

Fort nat Automenes, we e n your felicity
E ery so of your is of an infi te dexter ty
F rst th Harper kn n to all, and lo ed of all
exces els
Gu e and e ttend h st ps and lega t festi ity
V xt the Act shr wd of w t beyond ll
red b lits
Last fall Ariphrades, that soul of ingenuity
H boofh s nati e w t, w th a eon nality
Hit pon a undiscovered trick f bestiality
All alon th father t lls us, striki g out a no el line.

Some there a h said that I
was reconciled in mity
When upon m Cleon pressed
and made m smart with injury
Currying and ta n g m
then s the stripes fell hea ily
Th outsid laughed to see the sport
and hear m squallin lustily
Caring not a w t for me, but onl looking merrily
To know f squeezed and pressed I hanced
t d psom mall buffoonery
Seeing this, I played the pe littl bit u
doubted!
So then, f er it, the Vin pole
pr ed unfa thful to th Vine

Enter XANTHIAS.

X Ol ck tortoises, to ha such ains,
Thrice lucky f r th case upon you r bs
How ll and cu n gl your back a e roofed
W h tilin st o g enou h to keep out blow
Whilst I, I m cudg lled and tattooed t death.

Ch How no m bo for though man be old
Still, f he beaten w may call him bo

Xa Wa t th old man th most outr geous
nuisance
Much the most dru k nd r otous f all?
And et w d L on Ant phon, Hipp ll s
L sistrat s, Theo h stus, Ph ich
B th fa th noisiest of th lot.
Soon a h ig r ed h ful of the good cheer
H kipped h l pt, and laughed, and f sked, and
hinn ed
J t lik don ey n a feed of
And banged me o thful ca Boy! Boy!
So then L s tratus ompa ed him thus
Old man, sa are s like ewn n f mentun
O like somnnou scampers g t br
B th bri ked b k, And xu ou lik locu t
That ha t st hed th lamest of loak.
Or S henel orn of hi goods and chattels.
At this al lapped, sa Theoph st but h
Mad wry fa e, being forsooth a w t,

And p ay the old man asked him what makes
so
G e yourself airs, and think yourself so grand
You gri ning flatterer of the well to-do
Thus he kept banter n every guest in turn
Making rude jokes, nd tell ng idle tales,
I clownish fa h n tele ant t nothing
At la t well drunk homeward he turns once more,
Aim g a blow at e ery one he me ts.
Ah! here he s comin stumbling st ggering on.
Methi ks I ll vanish ere I m slapped a n.

Enter PHILOCLEON *w th a g l and* GUEST

Ph Up ahoy! out ahoy!
Some of you that follow me
Shall ere long be crying
If they don t shoo off I s ear
I ll frizzle em all with the torch I bear
I ll set the rogues a fryin

G est Zound ! we ll all make you pay for this
to morrow
You vile old rak howe er young you are!
We ll come nd cite and summon you all together

Ph Yah! hah! summon and cite!
Th obsolete not onl don t you know
I m ck of the names of your suits and
claims.
Fau h! Fau h! Pheugh!
Here s my d ht!
Away with the verd ct box! Won t he go?
Wh e s the H liast? out of my sight!
M little golden chaf r c me up here,
H ld by thi rope, a otten one perchance,
B t st ong enough for you. Mount up my dear
See now how cle ly I filched you off
A wa too hu sy flirti g with the guests
You we me, child some grat tud for that
But you r not one t pa your d bts, I know
O no! you ll lau h nd chaff and sl p away
That s what you al ays do B t l ten now
B a good gi l, and don t be d sobli g,
And when my son is dead, I'll ransom you,
And make you a honest woman F indeed
I m not yet maste of my own affa rs
I am so you g and kept so ery strict.
My son s m guardian, uch a c oss-g ained man,
A cummi p tting mu tard-se apin fellow
H so fraid that I should t rn out badly
For I m n truth his only father ow
B t here he uns. Beh h s aft us.
Quick, little lad hold these links n instant
And won t I q iz him bon hly nd well,
As he did me befor the in tiation.

Bd Yo there! you ther ! you o d lasci ious
dota d!
Enamoured eh? y of a fin r pe coffin.
Oh, b Apol o, you hall smart for this!

Ph Dea dear how keen to taste suit in pickl !

Bd No q izzing, s when you ha e fil hed ay
The F t girl from o r party

Ph Eh? what? fl te-girl?
You out of your mind or out of your g e, or
something.

Ph Ay ay I warrant I ve a mind for wriggling
Bd Come if you get with clever well read men
Could you tell tales good gentlemanly tales?
Ph Ay that I could
Bd What sort of tales?
Ph Why lots
As first how Lamia spluttered when they caught her
And next Cardopion how he swinged his mother
Bd Pooh pooh no legends give us something human
Some what we call domestic incident
Ph O ay I know a rare domestic tale
How once upon a time a cat and mouse—
Bd O fool and clown Theogenes replied
Rating the scavenger what! would you tell
Tales of a cat and mouse in company!
Ph What then?
Bd Some stylish thing as how you went
With Androcles and Cleisthenes surveying
Ph Why bless the boy I never went surveying
Save once to Paros at two obols a day
Bd Still you must tell how splendidly for instance
Ephudion fought the pancratiastic fight
With young Ascondas how the game old man
Though grey had ample sides strong hands firm flanks
An iron chest
Ph What humbug! could a man
Fight the pancratium with an iron chest!
Bd This is the way our clever fellows talk
But try another tack suppose you sat
Drinking with strangers what s the pluckiest feat
Of all your young adventures you could tell them?
Ph My pluckiest feat? O much my pluckiest much
Was when I stole away Ergasion s vine poles
Bd Tcha! poles indeed! Tell how you slew the boar
Or coursed the hare or ran the torch race tell
Your gayest youthfullest act
Ph My youthfullest action?
'Twas that I had when quite a hobbledehoy
With fleet Phayllus and I caught him too
Won by two—votes Twas for abuse that action
Bd No more of that but lie down there and learn
To be convivial and companionable
Ph Yes how lie down?
Bd In an elegant graceful way
Ph Like this do you mean?
Bd No not in the least like that
Ph How then?
Bd Extend your knees and let yourself
With practised ease subside along the cushions
Then praise some piece of plate inspect the ceiling
Admire the woven hangings of the hall
Ho! water for our hands! bring in the tables!
Dinner! the after wash! now the libation
Ph Good heavens! then is it in a dream we are feasting?
Bd The flute girl has performed! our fellow guests
Are Phanus Aeschines Theorus Cleon
Another stranger at Acestor s head
Could you with these cap verses properly?
Ph Could I? Ay truly no Diacrian better
Bd I ll put you to the proof Suppose I m Cleon
I ll start the catch Harmodius You re to cap it
(*singing*) Truly Athens never knew
Ph (*singing*) Such a rascally thief as you
Bd Will you do that? You ll perish in your noise
He ll swear he ll fell you quell you and expel you
Out of this realm
Ph Ay truly will he so?
And if he threaten I ve another strain
Mon lustin for power supreme ye ll mak
The city capseeze she s noo on the shak
Bd What if Theorus lying at his feet
Should grasp the hand of Cleon and begin
From the story of Admetus learn my friend to love the good
How will you take that on?
Ph I very neatly
It is not good the fox to play
Nor to side with both in a false friend s way
Bd Next comes that son of Sellus Aeschines
Clever accomplished fellow and he ll sing
O the money O the might
How Cleitagora and I
With the men of Thessaly —
Ph How we boasted you and I
Bd Well that will do you re fairly up to that
So come along we ll dine at Philoctemon s
Boy! Chrysus! pack our dinner up and now
For a rare drinking bout at last
Ph No no
Drinking ain t good I know what comes of drinking
Breaking of doors assault and battery
And then a headache and a fine to pay
Bd Not if you drink with gentlemen you know
They ll go to the injured man and beg you off
Or you yourself will tell some merry tale
A jest from Sybaris or one of Aesop s
Learned at the feast And so the matter turns
Into a joke and off he goes contented
Ph O I ll learn plenty of those tales if so
I can get off whatever wrong I do
Come go we in let nothing stop us now *Exeunt*

Chorus

Often have I deemed myself
exceeding bright acute and clever
Dull obtuse and awkward never
That is what Amynias is
of Curling borough Sellus son
Him who now upon an apple
and pomegranate dines I saw
At Leogoras s table
Eat as hard as he was able
Goodness, what a hungry maw!
Pinched and keen as Antiphon

Once he tra elled to Pharsalus, our ambassador
to be
There a sol ta s guest he
Sa sed w th onl th Penestae
Comin f om the tribe himself
th kindred tribe of Penury

Fortunat Aut menes, we en y your felicity
E ery son f yours is of an infi ite de terity
First th Ha per k own to all and l ed of all
exces el
Grace d w t attend his steps, and legant festi ity
ext th Actor h wd of wit bey nd all
ered bilit
La t f ll Ariphrades, that so l of ingen ty
H ha f his nat e t with rare or inality
Hit pon an undisco ered t ck of bestiality
Al alo the fath r tells us, striking out a no el line

S me th re are who said that I
wa rec led t amity
When upon me Cleon pressed
and mad me sma t w th njury
Currying nd ta m me
then a the stripes fell heavily
Th outsiders la ghed to see the sport
nd hear m squall g lustily
Caring not what for me but onl looking merrily
T know f squeezed and p essed I chanced
t drop some small buffoonery
Seein this, I played the pe a little bit un
doubtedly
So that, af r all the V ne pole
p ed unfa thful t the V e

E r XANTHIAS

X Ol kv toises, to ha e uch kins,
Thr el kv fo the cas upo your r bs
How w ll and cun i gly u b ck are oofed
With tile str e ou h to k p ut blows
Whil t I I m ud ll d and tattooed to death
Ch H w now m bo ? fo though man be old
St ll, f h beat n w may call him bo
X Wa n t th old ma th most outra eous
usa
Much th most dru k nd riotous f all?
And t d L co Ant ph n H pp llus
L s trat s, Theopl a tus, Ph n chu
B t f a ta th noisiest of th lot
Soo h I go ged h fill f th good ch r
H kipped he leapt nd la hed nd fri ked and
hi ed
J st k d k feed of o n
And pped o th f llv all B v! B !
So th L t at c mpared h m thu
Old ma sa sh o l k w f m nning
O like a scrap u sc mpe g t bran
B th h cked ba k And o o lik locust
That ha j t hed the lapper f t loak
Or Sthe el s h m f h good nd hatt l
At th ll lapped sa e Theoph st but he
Made a wry fa being f soothsa t

And pray " the old man asked him what makes
yo t
Gi e ourself airs, and th nk yourself so grand
You grinning flatterer of the well to-do
Thus he kept bant ring e ers guest in turn
Makin rud jokes, and t ll ng idle tales,
In clo nu h fa hio rele ant to nothing
At la t w ll d unk homeward he turns once more,
Aiming a bl w at everyone he meets
Ah! here he s comin stumblin stag ering on
M thinks I ll vanish ere I m slapped again

Enter PHILOCLEON *with a girl a d* GUEST

Ph Up ahoy! out ahoy!
Some of you that follow me
Shall ere lon be crying
If they don t shog ff I swear
I ll frizzle em all w th th torch I bear
I ll set the rogues a fry ng

Guest Zo nds! we ll all make y u pay for this
to-morrow
You ile old rake howe er young you re!
W ll come a d c te and summon you all together

Ph Yah! hah! *summon* and cite!
The obsolete not n! don t you know
I m sick of the names of your *suits* and
claims.
Faugh! Faugh! Phe gh!
He s my del ght
Away with the verd ct box! Won t he go?
Wh re s the Heliast? out of my sight!
My littl golden chafer come up h re
Hold by th rope a rotten on perchance
But strong enou h for you. Mount up my dear
Seen w how cle rly I *filched* you off
A w nton hussy flirt ng with the guests
You owe me, child som gratitud f r that.
B t you re not o e to pay your d bts, I know
O no! you ll laugh and chaff and sl p away
That s what you lways do But l ten now
Be a good girl and d n t be disobl g ng
And wh n my son is dead I ll r nsom you
And *mak* you an honest woman F r indeed
I m not yet maste of my own affairs
I am so y un and kept so very trict
My son s my guardia such cro grained man,
A cummin splitt *n* cr t rd scrap n fellow
H so afraid that I hould turn o t badly
F I m in truth his o l fathe ow
B t h he ru s. Belike he s after u
Quick, littl lad hold these links an in tant
And wo t I quiz him boyishly and well
A h did me befo the i itiati n.

Bd Y u the ol u there! you ld lascivious
d tard!
En m ed h ? s of a fine ripe coffin
Oh by Apol o u hall smart for this!

Ph Dea dear h w keen to ta te a s t n pickle!

Bd No g izzin sir when you ha e filched way
Th flut g l from our party

Ph Fh? what? flute girl?
Y u e out of your mind or o t of your grave or
something.

Bd Why bless the fool here s Dardanis beside you!
Ph What this? why *this* is a torch in the market place!
Bd A torch man?
Ph Clearly pray observe the punctures
Bd Then what s this black here on the top of her head?
Ph Oh that s the rosin oozing while it burns
Bd Then this of course is not a woman s arm?
Ph Of course not that s a sprouting of the pine
Bd Sprouting be hanged
(*to* DARDANIS) You come along with me
Ph Hi! hi! what are you at?
Bd Marching her off
Out of your reach a rotten as I think
And impotent old man (*He leads girl into house*)
Ph Now look ye here
Once when surveying at the Olympian games
I saw how splendidly Ephudion fought
With young Ascondas saw the game old man
Up with his fist and knock the youngster down
So mind your eye or you ll be pummelled too
Bd (*re entering*) Troth you have learned Olympia to some purpose
Enter BAKING-GIRL *with* CHAEREPHON
Baking Girl Oh there he is! Oh pray stand by me now!
There s the old rascal who misused me so
Banged with his torch and toppled down from here
Bread worth ten obols and four loaves to boot
Bd There now you see troubles and suits once more
Your wine will bring us
Ph Troubles? Not at all
A merry tale or two sets these things right
I ll soon set matters right with this young woman
B G No by the Twain! you shan t escape scot free
Doing such damage to the goods of Myrtia
Sostrata s daughter and Anchylion s, sir!
Ph Listen good woman I am going to tell you
A pleasant tale
B G Not me by Zeus sir no!
Ph At Aesop as he walked one eve from supper
There yapped an impudent and drunken bitch
Then Aesop answered O you bitch! you bitch!
If in the stead of that ungodly tongue
You d buy some wheat methinks you d have more sense
B G Insult me too? I summon you before
The Market Court for damage done my goods
And for my sompnour have this Chaerephon
Ph Nay nay but listen if I speak not fair
Simonides and Lasus once were rivals
Then Lasus says Pish I don t care says he
B G You will sir will you?
Ph And you Chaerephon
Are you her sompnour you like fear blanched Ino
Pendent before Euripides s feet?
Exeunt BAKING-GIRL *and* CHAEREPHON

Bd See here s another coming as I live
To summon you at least he has got his sompnour
Enter COMPLAINANT
Complainant O dear! O dear! Old man I summon you
For outrage
Bd Outrage? no by the Gods, pray don t
I ll make amends for every thing he has done
(Ask what you will) and thank you kindly too
Ph Nay I ll make friends myself without compulsion
I quite admit the assault and battery
So tell me which you ll do leave it to me
To name the compensation I must pay
To make us friends or will you fix the sum?
Co Name it yourself I want no suits nor troubles
Ph There was a man of Sybaris do you know
Thrown from his carriage and he cracked his skull
Quite badly too Fact was, he could not drive
There was a friend of his stood by and said
Let each man exercise the art he knows
So you run off to Doctor Pittalus
Bd Ay this is like the rest of your behaviour
Co (*to* BDELYCLEON) You sir yourself remember what he says
Ph Stop listen Once in Sybaris a girl
Fractured a jug
Co I call you friend to witness.
Ph Just so the jug *it* called a friend to witness
Then said the girl of Sybaris By r Lady [1]
If you would leave off calling friends to witness
And buy a rivet you would show more brains
Co Jeer till the Magistrate call on my case
Exit
Bd No by Demeter but you shan t stop here
I ll take and carry you—
Ph What now!
Bd What now?
Carry you in or soon there won t be sompnours
Enough for all your summoning complainants
Ph The Delphians once charged Aesop—
Bd I don t care
Ph With having filched a vessel of their God
But Aesop up and told them that a beetle—
Bd Zounds! but I ll finish you beetles and all
Exeunt PHILOCLEON *and* BDELYCLEON

Chorus

I envy much his fortune
As he changes from his dry
Ungenial life and manners
Another path to try
Now all to soft indulgence
His eager soul will take
And yet perchance it will not
For ah! tis hard to break
From all your lifelong habits
Yet some the change have made
With other minds consorting
By other counsels swayed

[1] Persephone.

W th us and all good people
Great praise Philocleon s son
For filial lo e and genius
I this affair has won.
Such sweet and gracious manners
I er saw before,
Nor ever w th such fondness
My doting heart gushed o er
Where proved he not the ctor
In all this wordy strife,
Seekin to raise his father
To high r path of life?

Enter X NTHIAS

Xa. O Dion sus! her s a pretty mess
Into our house som power h s whirl, gged
Soon as th old man heard the pipe and drank
The lon untasted wine he grew so merry
He won t stop dancin all the whole n ght through
Those strange old dances such as Thespi taught
And your new bards he ll pro e old fools, he sa s,
Dancing against them in the li ts directly

Re-enter PHILOCLEON *and* B EL CLEON

Ph. Who ts, who waits t the entra ce gates?
Xa. More and more is this e il ad ncing!
Ph Be the bolts und ne we ha e just begun
This, this is the first e olut on f danc ng
Xa First e olution of mad ess, I thi k.
Ph. W th the strong contort on the ribs twist round
And the nostril snorts, and the joints resound
And the tendons crack.
X O hellebo drink!
Ph Cocklike Phrynichus crouches a d cowers,
Xa You'll strike by and by
Ph. Then he kick his leg to th wonderin sky
Xa. O look to yourself, look out look out
Ph. For now in these sinewy joints f ours
The cup-like socket is twirled bout
Bd 'Twon t do, by Zeus twon t do tis down right madness.
Ph Come on, I hallenge all th world to dance
Now what tragedian thinks h da es well
Let him come i and da ce a mat h with m
Well, is there one r none?
Bd. Here s only one.

Enter Dancer as crab

Ph Who s he poor devil?
Bd 'Tis the midmost son
Of poet Carcinus, the Crabbe
Ph I'll eat him
'Sdeath! I ll destroy him with a knuckle-dance.
He s a born fool at rhythm.
Bd Nay but look here!
Here *comes* a brother crab an ther son
Of Carcinus.

Enter another Dancer

Ph Faith I e got crab enough
Bd Nothing but crabs! fore Zeus, nothing but crabs!
Here creeps a third of Carcinus s brood.
Ph Heyday! what s this? a vinegarette or spider?

Enter a third Dancer

Bd This is the Pinnoteer of all the tribe
The tin est crab a tragic poet too!
Ph. O Carcinus! O proud and happy father!
Here s a fine troop of wrynecks settling down.
Well I must gird me to the fight and you
Mix pickles for these crabs, i case I beat them.
Ch Come draw we aside and lea e them a wide
a roomy and peaceable exercise round
That before us therein l ke tops they may spin
re ol ing and whirli g and twi ling around
O lofty titled sons of the ocean ro ng sire
Ye brethren of the shrimps, come and leap
On the sand and on the strand
of the salt and barren deep.
Whisk nimble feet around you
kick out till all admire
The Phrynichean kick to the sky
That the audience may applaud
as they view your leg on high.
On on in mazy ci cles hit your stomach with your heel
Fling l gs loft to heaven
as like sp nning t ps you wheel.
Your S e is creepi g onward the Ruler of the Sea
He ga es w th delight at h s hobby-dancers three
Come dancing as you are if you like it lead away
For n ver yet I warrant has an ctor till to-day
Led out chorus, da cing at the ending of the Play

THE PEACE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TWO SERVANTS OF TRYGAEUS
TRYGAEUS
DAUGHTERS OF TRYGAEUS
HERMES
WAR
RIOT
HIEROCLES
A SICKLE MAKER
A CREST MAKER
A BREASTPLATE SELLER
A TRUMPETER
A HELMET SELLER
A SPEAR BURNISHER
SON OF LAMACHUS
SON OF CLEONYMUS
CHORUS OF FARMERS

The scene represents the exterior of the house of TRYGAEUS *two of whose* SERVANTS *are visible in the foreground ministering to the wants of an enormous dung beetle which is confined in one of the outer courts the walls of the court being sufficiently high to conceal its inmate from the audience*

1st Servant Bring bring the beetle cake
quick there quick! quick
2nd Servant Here!
1st S Give it him the abominable brute
2nd S O may he never taste a daintier morsel!
1st S Now bring another shaped from asses dung
2nd S Here here again
1st S Where s that you brought just now?
He can t have eaten it
2nd S No he trundled it
With his two feet and bolted it entire
1st S Quick quick and beat up several firm and tight
2nd S O help me scavengers by all the Gods!
Or I shall choke and die before your eyes
1st S Another cake a boy companion s bring him
He wants one finelier moulded
2nd S Here it is
There s one advantage in this work my masters
No man will say I pick my dishes now
1st S Pah! more bring more another and another
Keep kneading more
2nd S By Apollo no not I!
I can t endure this muck a moment longer
I ll take and pitch the muck tub in and all
1st S Aye to the crows and follow it yourself
2nd S Can any one of you I wonder tell me
Where I can buy a nose not perforated?
There s no more loathly miserable task
Than to be mashing dung to feed a beetle
A pig or dog will take its bit of muck
Just as it falls but this conceited brute
Gives himself airs and bless you he won t touch it
Unless I mash it all day long and serve it
As for a lady in a rich round cake
Now I ll peep in and see if he has done
Holding the door thus that he may not observe me
Aye tuck away go gobbling on don t stop
I hope you ll burst yourself before you know it
Wretch! how he throws himself upon his food
Squared like a wrestler grappling with his jaws
Twisting his head and hands now here now there
For all the world like men who plait and weave
Those great thick ropes to tow the barges with
Tis a most stinking foul voracious brute
Nor can I tell whose appanage he is
I really think he can t be Aphrodite s
Nor yet the Graces
1st S No? then whose?
2nd S I take it
This is the sign of sulphur bolting Zeus
Now I suspect some pert young witling there
Is asking Well but what s it all about?
What can the beetle mean? And then I think
That some Ionian sitting by will answer
Now I ve nae doubt but this is aimed at Cleon
It eats the muck sae unco shamelessly
But I will in and give the beetle drink
1st S And I will tell the story to the boys
And to the lads and also to the men
And to the great and mighty men among you
And to the greatest mightiest men of all
My master s mad a novel kind of madness
Not your old style but quite a new invention
For all day long he gazes at the sky
His mouth wide open thus and rails at Zeus
O Zeus says he what seekest thou to do?
Lay down thy besom sweep not Hellas bare!
Trygaeus (*behind the scenes*) Ah me! Ah me!
2nd S Hush! for methinks I hear him speaking now
Tr (*behind the scenes*) O Zeus
What wouldest thou with our people? Thou wilt drain
The lifeblood from our cities ere thou knowest!
2nd S Aye there it is that s just what I was saying
Ye hear yourselves a sample of his ravings
But what he did when first the frenzy seized him
I ll tell you he kept muttering to himself
Oh if I could but somehow get to Zeus!
With that he got thin scaling ladders made

And ev I b them to scram l up to heaven,
Till he came tumbl down, nd cra ked hi skull.
Then extends h s.   I know not whither
And brou ht a huge Aetnaean beetle hom
And made me groom it whil he con ed it d wn
Lik a tom favourite colt and kept n savin
"W Pegasus, m fi in thoroughbred
Your wi es m st w it me tra ht awa to Zeus!"
N w I'll peep in nd see what h   about
Oh, me ev on us! nei hbours! nei hbours! help!
M mast s got stra upon th beetl
And up they go scendin in th ai
Enter Tryg eus o   a great dung beetl with wings spread.
T   Fair and so tl   m beastie! at first
Start not at once with a   ou nt burst
In the proud d light of your eage might
E you joints ith sweat are rela ed and wet
From the powerful sw n of your stalwart win
And breathe not strong as we soar alon
I yo can t refrain, ou had best remain
Down here in the stall   f our master s halls.
* rd S* O master of m ! why h w mad you must be!
T   Keep silence! keep silence!
* rd S* Wh   where d you try so inanel to fly?
T M fli ht for the sak   f all H llas I tak
A nov l and dari   ad enture preparin
2nd S Why can t ou remain   t home and be sane?
T   O let not   word of ill omen be heard
B t greet me with blessings and cheers a   I go,
And order mankind t   be silent below
And please t   be su   w th bri ks to secure
All places recept e f d   nd manure.
2nd S No, no I won t keep till unless you tell m
Whither you r fl ng off
T   Whither xcept
T visit Zeus in hea en?
2nd S   What e er for?
T   I m going t   ask him what he *is goin*   to do
About th Hellenic peoples, on   nd all.
2nd S And if he wo   t inform ou
T   I ll indi t him
As giving Hella o er to th Medes.
2nd S   (*struggling with Tryga us*)
Not while I li e so help me Dionysus!
T   There is no way but this.
2nd S   Here! hold on! here!
Quick quick our father st alin off to hea n
Lea   you here deserted and forlorn.
Speak   him, p ead w th him, you ll sta ed mad ns.
Enter the D ghte s o Tr g   s.
Girl O father O fath   nd can t be tru
Th t le that is om t ou ears bout ou
That along w h the bi ds ou   goin to go,
And to lea   u alon and be off to th crow?
Is it fact O my father
O t ll m th truth if you lo e me
T   Yes it   ppears so, m child
  t truth I am sorry to see ou
Calling me dearest papa,
and asking m   bread f r your dinner
When I ha e got n the house
not an atom of sil er to buy it
B t if I e er return with success
 ve shall soon be enjoying
Buns of enormous size
with stro g fist sauce to mpro e them.
Gi   And what s to be the method of you passage?
Sh ps will not d   the cannot go th s journey
Tr   I nd a steed with wings no sh ps for me
G   But what s the wit of harness g a beetle
To ride on it to heaven papa, papa
T   It is the onl h in thin with w ngs,
So Aesop says, that e er reached the Gods.
G   O father father that s too good a story
That such a stinking brute should enter heaven!
Tr   It went to tak reve ge upon the ea le
And break her eggs, a ma   year ago
G   But should you not ha e harnessed Pegasus,
And so, in tragic style approach th God ?
T   N   then I must ha e had supplies for two
But now th   ers food I eat myself
All thi will presently be food for him
G   What if he f lls wintry watery wa es,
How will his w ng h lp extricate him then?
T   Oh, I ve a rudder all prepared for that
M sh p   a beetl   sloop of Naxian make
G   What ba   will land you drift ng drif ing on?
Tr   Wh   in P raeus, there s th Beetle Bay
G   Yet O be careful lest ou tumble off
And (lame for lif) aff rd Euripid s
A subject and become a tragic h ro.
T   I'll see to that goodb e goodbye my dears!
B t ou for whom I toil and labour so,
Do for three days esist the calls of nature
S nce if my beetl   n the air should smell t
H   ll toss me head ong off and turn t graze
Up, up my Pegasus, mer ily cheerily
With ears complacent while bl the and bold
Your cu bs shake out their clatt r of gold
(I wond r what in th world he means
By pointin   his nose at those foul latrines.)
Rise valiantly rise from the earth t   the skies,
And on w th the beat of your pinion flee
Till you com   to Zeus in his heav nl seat
From all your earthl   supplies of dirt
From ordur   and m ck our nost il   ert
Man! ma   Petraeus! you ll kill me I s ear
Co nmitti   a uisa ce! good f llow f bear
Dig t down n th ground scatte   pe fumes around
Heap heap up the earth on th   t   p
Pla t sweet mellin   th me to e circle the mound
Brin   m rrh on t summ t to drop
F r if through ou foll   hall tumble to-day
And my enterprise fail to succeed ir
F e talent th city of Chios hall pa
On account of your b each—of good breed ng
The scene suddenly changes

*Trygaeus has been in the   ir supported b   some sort of crane but now some sort of platform is pushed for ward w th the Palace of Zeus for its background, and on thi Trygaeu dismou ts.

Zounds! how you scared me I m not joking now
I say scene shifter have a care of me
You gave me quite a turn and if you don t
Take care I m certain I shall feed my beetle
But now methinks we must be near the Gods
And sure enough there stand the halls of Zeus
Oh open! open! who s in waiting here?

Hermes (*within*) A breath of man steals o er me
whence whence comes it? (*Opens door*)
O Heracles what s this?
Tr A beetle horse
He O shameless miscreant vagabond and rogue
O miscreant utter miscreant worst of miscreants
How came you here you worst of all the miscreants?
Your name? what is it? speak!
Tr The worst of miscreants
He Your race? your country? answer!
Tr *Worst of miscreants*
He And who s your father?
Tr Mine? the worst of miscreants
He O by the Earth but you shall die the death
Unless you tell me who and what you are
Tr Trygaeus an Athmonian skilled in vines
No sycophant no lover of disputes
He Why are you come?
Tr To offer you this meat
He How did you get here Wheedling?
Tr Oho Greedling!
Then I m not quite the worst of miscreants now
So just step in and summon Zeus
He O! O!
When you re not likely to come *near* the Gods!
They re gone they left these quarters yesterday
Tr Where on Earth are they?
He Earth indeed!
Tr *But where?*
He Far far away close to Heaven s highest dome
Tr How came they then to leave you here alone?
He I have to watch the little things they left
Pipkins and pannikins and trencherlets
Tr And what s the reason that they went away?
He They were so vexed with Hellas therefore
here
Where they were dwelling they ve established
War
And given you up entirely to his will
But they themselves have settled up aloft
As high as they can go that they no more
May see your fightings or receive your prayers
Tr *Why have they treated us like that? do tell
me*
He Be au e thou h They were oftentimes for
Peace
You always would have War If the La onians
Achieved some slight advantage they would say
Noo by the Twa[1] sall master Attic catch it
Or if the Attics had their turn of luck
And the Laconians came to treat for peace
At once ye cried We re being taken in
Athene! Zeus! we can t consent to this
They re sure to come again if we keep Pylus.
Tr Yes that s exactly how we talked exactly
He So that I know not if ye e er again
Will see the face of Peace.
Tr Why where s she gone to?
He War has immured her in a deep deep pit
Tr Where?
He Here beneath our feet And you may see
The heavy stones he piled about its mouth
That none should take her out
Tr I wish you d tell me
How he proposes now to deal with us
He I only know that ye ter eve he brought
Into this house a most gigantic mortar
Tr What is he going to do with that I wonder!
He He means to put the cities in and pound
them
But I shall go He s making such a din
I think he s coming out *Exit*
Tr Shoo! let me run
Out of his way methought that I myself
Heard a great mortar s war inspiring blast
Enter WAR *bearing a gigantic mortar in which he
is about to mix a salad*
War O mortals! mortals! wondrous woeful
mortals!
How ye will suffer in your jaws directly!
Tr O King Apollo what a great big mo tar!
Oh the mere look of War how bad it is!
Is this the actual War from whom we flee
The dread tough War the War upon the legs?
War (*throwing in leeks*)
O Prasiae! O thrice wretched five times wretched
And tens of times how you ll be crushed to day!
Tr Friends this as yet is no concern of ours
This is a blow for the Laconian side
War (*throwing in ga lic*)
O Megara! Megara! in another moment
How you ll be worn and torn and ground to salad!
Tr Good gracious! O what heavy bitter tears
He has thrown in to mix for Megara
War (*throwing in cheese*)
O Sicily! and you ll be ruined too
Tr Ah how that hapless state will soon be grated!
War And now I ll pour some Attic honey in
Tr Hey there I warn you use some other honey
Be sparing of the Attic that costs sixpence
War Ho boy! boy! Riot!
Riot (*entering*) What s your will?
War You ll catch it
You rascal standing idle there! take that!
Ri Ugh how it stings O me! O m ! why master
Sure you ve not primed your knuckles with the
garlic?
War Run in and get a pestle
Ri We ve not got one
We only moved in yesterday you know
War Then run at once and borrow one from
Athens
Ri I ll run by Zeus or else I m sure to catch it
Exit

[1]The Dioscuri.

T What to be done, my poor dear mortals, now?
Just see how terrible our danger is
For if that varlet bring a pestle back,
War will t down and pul erize our cities.
Heavens! may h perish and not brin on back
R You there!
W What! Don t you brin it?
R Just look here sir
Th pestl th Athenians had is lost
The t er fellow that disturbed all Hellas.
T O well done he, Athene mighty mistress
Well is he lost and for the state s ad antag
Before t ey e mixed us up this bitter salad
War Then run away and fetch from Lacedaemon
Another pestle.
R Yes, sir
War Don t be long
T Now is the crisis of our fat my friends.
And if there s here a man initiate
In Samothrace is now the hour to pray
For t e a erting of—th varlet s feet.
R Alas! alas! and y t again, alas!
War What ails you? don t you bring one now?
R O Sir
The Spartans too ha e lost their pestle now
War How so, ou rascal?
R Why they lent it out
To friends up Thraceward, and they lost it there.
T And well don the ! well done! Twin sons of Zeus!
Tak courage mortals all may y t be well.
War Pick up the things, and carry them away
I'll go within and make myself pestle.
Exeunt WAR *and* RIOT
T Now may I sin the od that Datis mad
Th ode h sang in ecstasy at noon,
"Eh, sirs, I m pleased, and joyed and comforted."
Now men f Hellas, now th hour has com
T t row away our troubles and our wars,
And, er another pestle rise to st p us,
T pull out Peace, the j f all mankind.
O all y farmers, merchants, artisans,
O all ye craftsmen, liens, sojourners,
O ll islanders, O all ye peoples,
Come with ropes, and pades, and crowbars,
come n eager hurrying hast
Now the cup f happy fortune,
brothers, t is ours to taste.
Enter CHORUS OF LABORER
Chorus Come then heart and soul, my comrades,
hast to win this great salvation,
Now or ever now if ever
come the whol Hellenic nation!
Throw way your ranks nd squadrons,
throw ou scarl t plagues way
Lo, t length the da is dawni
Lamachus-detesting day!
O be thou our guide and leader
manan presiding o er us,
For I think I shan t gi e o er
in this noble task before us,
Till with levers, cranes, and pulleys
once again to light we haul
Peace, the Goddess best and greatest
ne ard lovingest of all.
Tr O be q uet! O be qui t! by your noisy loud deli ht
You will waken War the demon,
who is crouching out of sight.
Ch O we j y we joy we jo to
hear your glorious proclamations,
So unlike that odious "Wanted
at the camp with three days rations."
T Yet beware, beware remember!
Cerberus is down below
He may come with fuss and fury
(as when he was here you know)
E ery obstacle and hindrance
in the way of Peace to throw
Ch. Who shall bear her who shall tear her
from these loving arms away
If I once can clasp and grasp her?
O hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!
Tr Zounds! you ll surely be our ruin
stop your clamour I entreat
War will by and bye come trampling
everythin beneath his feet.
Ch. Let him stamp, and tramp, and trample
let him do whate er he will
I am so immensely happy that I really can t be still.
T What the mischi f! what s the matter?
do not by the Gods, I pray
With your dancings and your prancings
spoil our noble work to-day
Ch. Really now I didn t mean to no I did t I declare
Quite without my will my ankles
will perform this joyous air
Tr Well, but don t go on at present
cease your dancin or you ll rue it.
Ch Look, observe, I y real ceased t
Tr So you say but stil you do t.
Ch Only once, I do beseech you only just a sin le hop.
T W ll then, one make hast bout i
only one and then you stop.
Ch Stop? of course we stop with pleasur
if twill your designs assist.
T Well, but look you re still proceedin
Ch. Just by Zeus, on other twist
Let m fling my ri ht leg upwards,
and I ll really then r frain,
T This indulgence too I ll gra t you,
so you don t offend again
Ch Hah! but here s my l ft leg also
t must ha its turn tis plain.
(*dancing vigorously with both leg*)
I'm so happy glad, deli hted,
getti g rid of arms at last
More than if, my youth renew
I th slough of Age had ca t

[1]Persian commander Marathon and noted for his blunders in Greek. Thus, he verb endings of l. 29

Tr Well but don t exult at present
for we re all uncertain still
But when once we come to hold her
then be merry if you will
Then will be the time for laughing
Shouting out in jovial glee
Sailing sleeping feasting quaffing
All the public sights to see
Then the Cottabus be playing
Then be hip hip hip hurrahing
Pass the day and pass the night
Like a regular Sybarite
Ch O that it were yet my fortune
those delightful days to see!
Woes enough I ve had to bear
Sorry pallets trouble care
Such as fell to Phormio s share
I would never more thereafter so morose and bitter be
Nor a judge so stubborn hearted
unrelenting and severe
You shall find me yielding then
Quite a tender youth again
When these weary times depart
Long enough we ve undergone
Toils and sorrows many a one
Worn and spent and sick at heart
From Lyceum to Lyceum
trudging on with shield and spear
Now then tell us what you would
Have us do and we ll obey
Since by fortune fair and good
You re our sovereign Lord to day
Tr Come let me see which way to move the stones

Re enter HERMES

He Rogue! miscreant! what are you up to now?
Tr No harm
Every thing s right as Cillicon observed
He *Wretch! you shall die!*
Tr When it s my lot of course
For being Hermes you ll use lots I know
He O you are doomed! doomed! doomed!
Tr Yes? for what day?
He This very instant
Tr But I m not prepared
I ve bought no bread and cheese as if to die
He Ah well you re absolutely gone!
Tr That s odd
To get such famous luck and yet not know it
He Then don t you know that death s denounced by Zeus
On all found digging h re?
Tr And is it so?
And must I die indeed?
He You must indeed
Tr O then I prithee lend me half a crown
I ll buy a pig and get initiate first
He Ho! Zeus! Zeus! thunder crasher!
Tr O pray don t
O by the heavenly powers don t peach upon us
He No no I won t keep silence
Tr O pray do
O by the heavenly meat I brought you master
He Why bless you Zeus will quite demolish me
If I don t shout and tell him all about it
Tr O pray don t shout my darling dearest Hermes
Don t stand gaping there my comrades
are ye quite deprived of speech?
What s the matter? speak ye rascals!
if you don t he s safe to peach
Ch Do not do not mighty Hermes
do not do not shout I pray
If you e er have tasted swine
Tasted sucking pigs of mine
Which have soothed your throat divine
Think upon it think upon it
nor despise the d ed to-day
Tr King and master won t you listen
to the coaxing words they say?
Ch View us not with wrathful eye
Nor our humble prayers deny
From this dungeon let us hand her
O if you indeed detest
And abhor the sweeping crest
And the eyebrows of Peisander
Let us now O God most gracious!
let us carry Peace away
Then we ll glad processions bring
Then with sacrifices due
We will always lord and king
We will always honour you
Tr O sir be pitiful and heed their cry
They never showed you such respect as now
He Why no they never were such thieves as now
Tr And then I ll tell you a tremendous secret
A horrid dreadful plot against the Gods
He Well tell away I m open to conviction
Tr Tis that the Moon and vile immoral Sun
Have long been plotting to your hurt and now
They re giving Hellas up to the Barbarians
He Why are they doing that?
Tr Because by Zeus!
We sacrifice to *you* but those Barbarians
Only to *them* So naturally they
Are very anxious that we all should perish
And they get all the rites of all the Gods
He Then that s the reason why they clipped the days
And nibbled off their rounds misguiding sinners
Tr It is it is come Hermes lend a hand
Help us to pull her out And then for you
We ll celebrate the great Panathenaea
And all the other rites of all the Gods
Demeter Zeus Adonis all for you
And every where the cities saved from woe
Will sacrifice to you the Saviour Hermes
Much much besides you ll gain and first of all
I give you this (*producing a gold cup*)
a vessel for libations
He Fie! how I soften at the sight of gold!
There my men the work s before you!
I ve got nothing more to say

Quick, take up your spades, and enter
sho clun all the stones away
Ch. Gadl gladly will we do t,
wisest of the Gods and you
Like a skilled superior craftsman,
teach us what we ou ht to do.
I warrant, when the wa w know
you ll find us an thin but slow
T H d out th essel, and we ll launch the work
With free libation and th holy prayers.
H *Pour libations.*
Silence! silence! pour libations.
T And as we pour we ll pray O happ morn
Be thou th source of e ery joy to Hellas!
And O may he who labours well to-day
B never forced to bear a shi ld again!
Ch. No may he spend his happ days in peace,
S ing, the fire, his mistress t his sid
T If t ere be an that delights in war
King Dion sus, ma h never cease
Pickin out spearhead from his funn bones.
Ch. If an seekin to be made a Captain,
Ha es to see Peace return, O ma he e er
Fare in his battles lik Cleonymus.
T If any merchant, sellin spears or shields,
Would fain have battles, to impr e hi trade
May h be seized b thieves nd eat raw barley
Ch If an would be General won t assist us,
Or any sla prepari to desert,
May he be flogged, nd b ken on the wheel,
But on oursel es all j hip, hip, hurrah!
T Don t talk of being hipped Hurrah s the word.
Ch. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah s the word to-day
T (*pouring libations*)
T Hermes, Lov Desire, th Hours, and Graces.
Ch. Not Ares
T (*with disgust*) Nol
Ch. Nor Enyalius?
T No.
Ch. Now all set to, and labour at th ropes.
H Y ho! pull awa
Ch. Pull wa little stron er
H Y ho pull way
Ch. Keep t p little longer
H Pull, pull, pull, pull.
T Ah t ey don t pull all alike.
Cease our cram ts but feigning
Pull, Boeotian ! or I ll trike.
H Y ho pull wa
T Pull way awa way
Ch. (BOTH G ET nd ERASE)
Venl ou hould be h lpi us too.
T (*indignantly*) Don t I train, might and main,
Cli g nd swing tug and haul?
Ch. Y t w don t ad an t ll.
T Now don t sit there and thwart us, Lamachus.
W don t requir our B gaboo, my man.[1]

He These Argi es, too, they give no help at all.
They onl laugh at us, our toils and troubles,
And all the while take pay from either side.
Tr But the Laconians, comrad pull like men.
He Ah, mark, tis only such s work in wood
That fain would help us but the smith impedes.
Tr And the Megarians d no good they pull,
thou h,
Scrabbling away like ra enous puppy dogs.
Good la k! they re regularly starved and ruined.
Ch We make no wa m comrades we must try
A stro. pull, and a lon pull, all together
H Y o ho! pull way
Tr Keep it up a little longer
He Y o ho! pull way
Tr Yes, b Zeus! a l ttle stronger
Ch. Very slow *now we go.*
Tr What a sham ful dirty trick!
Som are worki others shirkin,
Argi es, e shall feel the stick.
He Y o ho! pull awa
Tr Pull away awa away
Ch Some of ou st ll are designing us ill.
Tr Y who fain Peace would gain,
Pull and strai mi ht and main.
Ch Some one s hinde s us vain.
H Plague take you, men of Megara get out!
The Goddess hates you she remembers well
'Twas you that primed her up at first with garlic.
St p stop Athenian sh ft your hold a little
It s no use pullin as you re now disposed
You don t do an thi but go to law
No, f you really want to pull her out
Stand back trifle further towa ds the sea.
Ch. Come, let us farmers pull alone
and set our shoulders to it
He Upon my word you re gaini ground
I think you goin to do it
Ch. H says we re really gain ground
cheer up, cheer up, my hearty
Tr The farmers ha e it all themsel es,
and not another party
Ch. *Pull again, pull, my men*
Now we re gaining fast
Never slacken, put your back in,
Her sh comes t last
Pull pull, pull, pull, every man, all he can
Pull, pull, pull pull, pull,
Pull pull, pull, pull all together
PEACE *is lifted ut with her two attendants* HAR EST HOME *and* M YFAIR.
T G of grapes, O how shall I add ess you?
O for a word ten thousand bucket big
Wherewith to accost you for I e none at hand
Good mornin Harvesthome good morn Mayfair
O what a lovely charmin face Mayfair! (*Kisses her*)
O what breath! how fragrant to m heart
How sweet how soft, with perfum nd inaction.
H N t quite th odour of a knapsack, eh?
T F gh! that odious pouch of odious men, I hate t.

[1] The Gorgon shield of Lamach s, one of the Athenian generals in the Sicilian expedition.

It has a smell of rancid onion whiffs
But *she* of harvests banquets festivals
Flutes thrushes plays the odes of Sophocles
Euripidean wordlets
He O how dare you
Slander her so I m sure she does not like
That logic monger s wordy disputations
Tr (*continuing*) The bleating lambs the ivy leaf the vat
Full bosomed matrons hurrying to the farm
The tipsy maid the drained and emptied flask
And many another blessing
He And look there
See how the reconciled cities greet and blend
In peaceful intercourse and laugh for joy
And that too though their eyes are swoln and blackened
And all cling fast to cupping instruments
Tr Yes and survey the audience by their looks
You can discern their trades
He O dear! O dear!
Don t you observe the man that makes the crests
Tearing his hair? and yon s a pitchfork seller
Fie! how he fillips the sword cutler there
Tr And see how pleased that sickle maker looks
Joking and poking the spear burnisher
He Now then give notice let the farmers go
Tr O yes! O yes! the farmers all may go
Back to their homes farm implements and all
You can leave your darts behind you
yea for sword and spear shall cease
All things all around are teeming
with the mellow gifts of Peace
Shout your Paeans march away
to labour in your fields to-day
Ch Day most welcome to the farmers
and to all the just and true
Now I see you I am eager
once again my vines to view
And the fig trees which I planted
in my boyhood s early prime
I would fain salute and visit
after such a weary time
Tr First then comrades to the Goddess
be our grateful prayers addressed
Who has freed us from the Gorgons
and the fear inspiring crest
Next a little salt provision fit for country uses buy
Then with merry expedition
homeward to the fields we ll hie
He O Poseidon! fair their order
sweet their serried ranks to see
Right and tight like rounded biscuits
or a thronged festivity
Tr Yes, by Zeus! the well armed mattock
seems to sparkle as we gaze
And the burnished pitchforks glitter
in the sun s delighted rays.
Very famously with those
will they clear the vineyard rows
So that I myself am eager
homeward to my farm to go
Breaking up the little furrows
(long neglected) with the hoe.
Think of all the thousand pleasures
Comrades which to Peace we owe
All the life of ease and comfort
Which she gave us long ago
Figs and olives wine and myrtles
Luscious fruits preserved and dried
Banks of fragrant violets blowing
By the crystal fountain s side
Scenes for which our hearts are yearning
Joys that we have missed so long——
—Comrades here is Peace returning
Greet her back with dance and song!
Ch Welcome welcome best and dearest
welcome welcome welcome, home.
We have looked and longed for thee
Looking longing wondrously
Once again our farms to see
O the joy the bliss, the rapture
really to behold thee come
Thou wast aye our chief enjoyment
thou wast aye our greatest gain
We who ply the farmer s trade
Used through thy benignant aid
All the joys of life to hold
Ah! the unbought pleasures free
Which we erst received of thee
In the merry days of old
When thou wast our one salvation
and our roasted barley grain.
Now will all the tiny shoots
Sunny vine and fig tree sweet
All the happy flowers and fruits,
Laugh for joy thy steps to greet
Ah but where has Peace been hiding
all these long and weary hours?
Hermes teach us all the story
kindest of the heavenly Powers.
He O most sapient worthy farmers,
listen now and understand
If you fain would learn the reason,
why it was she left the land
Pheidias began the mischief
having come to grief and shame
Pericles was next in order
fearing he might share the blame,
Dreading much your hasty temper
and your savage bulldog ways,
So before misfortune reached him
he contrived a flame to raise
By his Megara enactment[1]
setting all the world ablaze
Such a bitter smoke ascended
while the flames of war he blew
That from every eye in Hellas
everywhere the tears it drew
Wailed the vine and rent its branches
when the evil news it heard

[1] The [illegible] edict prohibiting the Megarians from all intercourse with the Athenian empire.

Butt on butt was dashed and shivered
by revenge and anger stirred
There was none to stay the tumult
Peace in silence disappeared
Tr By Apollo I had ne er
heard these simple facts narrated
No, nor knew she was so cl sely
to our Phe dias related
Cl No, nor I till just thi mome t
that is why she looks so fair
Goodness me! how many thi g
escape our notice I declare
H Then when nce the subject cities,
er whom ye bare the sway
Saw you at each other narl ng
rowling ang ier day by day
To escape the contrib tions,
ers w ll ng ner e th y strained
And the chi f Lac nia leaders
b en rmous b bes they gained
These at once f r filthy l c e
g st-delude s as they are,
Hustling out this gr cious lad
g eed ly mbraced the War
But from thi their own adva ta
ruin to their farmers came
For from h nce th ea r galleys
sail g f th with v ng f l aim,
S allowed p th fig f people
who w e ot perchanc to blame
T V ry justly e v ju tl !
ri hly had they ea ned th blow
Loppin down th dusky fi tre
I ha l l ed and nurtured so.
Ch Very justly v ju tl !
sin e m g eat capacious bin,
Ugh! th ra cal cam oss t
took ston and sto e it n
H Then y labourn populat on
flocking i f om le nd plai
Never dreamed that like th oth rs,
the th msel es were sold f gain
But as ha ing lost thei gr pe t nes,
nd desiri g figs t g t,
Ev ry one h s rapt tt nt on
on th publ speakers set
These bel ld yo poor d famisl ed
la k n all you home ppl es,
Straight they pitchf ked t the Goddess,
scout ng h ith y lls d cries,
Wh nsoe (f m h he lo ed yo)
ba k h tu ed w th w tful eyes.
Then th su t they ed nd harassed
y u ubst ntial rich ll es,
Whi pering in our Th f llow
let s t Brasidas, and yo
l k pack f hound horu
on th q i ring vict m flew
Yea the Cit sick and pallid
hi ring w th disease nd fright
Any calumny they cast h r
te with ravenous ppet te
Till at last your friends percei ing
whence their heavy wounds arose,
Stopped with gold the mouths of speakers
who were such d sastrous foes.
Thus the scoundrels thro e and prospered
wh lst distracted Hellas came
Unobserved to wrack and *ruin*
but the fellow most to blame
W s a tanner [1]
Tr Softly softly Hermes master say not so
Let the man remain in silence,
wheresoe er he is, below
For the man is ours no longer
he is all your own you know
Therefore whatsoe er you call him
Kna e and lave while yet amongst us,
W angler jangler false accuser
T oubler m ddler all-confuser
You will all these names be calling
One who now is yours alone.
(*to* PEACE)
But t ll me lady why you stand so mute.
He Oh, she won t peak one word before this
ud en e
No, no they ve wronged her far too much for that.
Tr Then won t she whisper all alone to you?
H Will you, my dearest speak your thoughts
t m ?
Come of all lad es most shield handl hating
(*ffects to listen.*)
Yes, good that s their offence I unde stand
Liste spectators, why she blames you so
She say that after that affair in Pylus
She cam unb dden, with a chest of treat es,
And thr ce y u blackballed her in full assembly
Tr We rred in that but lady pa d n us,
F then our wits were swaddled up n skins
He Well then attend t what she sks me now
Who i yo ty lo es her least? nd who
Lo es her the best and shrinks from fighting most?
Tr Cleo ymus, I think, by far the most.
He What so t of man is this Cleonymus
I military matters?
Tr E e llent
Only he s not his so-called fath r s son
Fo f he goes to battle in a trice
He p ves himself castaway—of shi lds.
He Still further listen what sh asks me now
Who is it o that sways th Assembly-stone?
T Hyperbolus at present h lds the place.
But h now Mist ess? Why a ert your eyes?
H Sh tu ns ay in an r *from* the peopl
F tak g to itself so lle a lead
T He s a m e e makeshift we ll not use him
now
'Twa that the people, bare and stripped of leaders,
Ju t caught him up to gird tself w thal.
H She ask h w this ca benefit the state.
T 'Twill make ur counsels brighter
H Will it? h w?

[1] Cleon.

Tr Because he deals in lamps before he came
We all were groping in the dark but now
His lamps may give our council board some light
He Oh! oh!
What things she wants to know!
Tr What sort of things?
He All the old things existing when she left
And first she asks if Sophocles be well
Tr He s well but strangely metamorphosed
He How?
Tr He s now Simonides not Sophocles
He What do you mean?
Tr He s grown so old and sordid
He d put to sea upon a sieve for money
He Lives the old wit Cratinus?
Tr No he perished
When the Laconians made their raid
He How so?
Tr Swooned dead away he could not bear to see
A jolly butt of wine all smashed and wasted
Much much beside we ve suffered wherefore lady
We ll never never let you go again
He Then on these terms I ll give you Harvest
home
To be your bride and partner in your fields
Take her to wife and propagate young vines
Tr O Harvesthome! come here and let me kiss
you
But Hermes won t it hurt me if I make
Too free with fruits of Harvesthome at first?
He Not if you add a dose of pennyroyal
But since you re going please to take Mayfair
Back to the Council whose of old she was
Tr O happy Council to possess Mayfair!
O what a three-days s carnival you ll have!
What soup! what tripe! what delicate tender meat!
But fare thee well dear Hermes
He And do you
Farewell dear mortal and remember me
Tr Home home my beetle! let us now fly home
He Your beetle s gone my friend
Tr Why where s he gone to?
He Yoked to the car of Zeus he bears the
thunder
Tr What will he get to eat poor creature there?
He Why Ganymede s ambrosia to be sure
Tr And how shall I get down?
He O well enough
There by the side of Peace
Tr Now girls now girls
Keep close to me our youngsters I well know
Are sore all over for the love of you
Exeunt TRYGAEUS *with* HARVESTHOME *and* MAYFAIR

Chorus

Yes, go and good fortune escort you my friend
meanwhile the machines and the wraps
We ll give to our faithful attendants to guard
for a number of dissolute chaps
Are sure to be lurking about on the stage
to pilfer and plunder and steal
Here take them and watch them and keep them
with care
while we to the audience reveal
The mind of our Play and whatever we may
By our native acumen be prompted to say

Twere proper and right for the Ushers to smite
if ever a bard we confess
Were to fill with the praise of himself and his plays
our own anapaestic address
But if ever O daughter of Zeus, it were fit
with honour and praise to adorn
A Chorus Instructor the ablest of men
the noblest that ever was born
Our Poet is free to acknowledge that he
is deserving of high commendation
It was he that advancing unaided alone
compelled the immediate cessation
Of the jokes which his rivals were cutting at rags
and the battles they waged with the lice
It was he that indignantly swept from the stage
the paltry ignoble device
Of a Heracles needy and seedy and greedy
a vagabond sturdy and stout
Now baking his bread now swindling instead
now beaten and battered about
And freedom he gave to the lachrymose slave
who was wont with a howl to rush in
And all for the sake of a joke which they make
on the wounds that disfigure his skin
Why how now my poor knave? so they bawl
to the slave
has the whipcord invaded your back
Spreading havoc around hacking trees to the
ground
with a savage resistless attack?
Such vulgar contemptible lumber at once
he bade from the drama depart
And then like an edifice stately and grand
he raised and ennobled the Art
High thoughts and high language he brought on
the stage
a humour exalted and rare
Nor stooped with a scurrilous jest to assail
some small man and woman affair
No he at the mightiest quarry of all
with the soul of a Heracles flew
And he braved the vile scent of the tan pit and
went
through foul mouthed revilings for you
And I at the outset came down in the lists
with the jaggèd fanged monster to fight
Whose eyeballs were lurid and glaring with flames
of Cynna s detestable light
And around his forehead the thin forked tongues
of a hundred sycophants quiver
And his smell was the smell of a seal and his voice
was a brawling tempestuous River
And his hinder parts like a furnace appeared
and a goblin s uncleansable liver
But I recked not the least for the look of the beast
I never desponded or quailed

And I fou ht for the safety of you and the Isles
I galla tly fought and pr aled
You therefore should heed and remember th deed
and afford me my guerdon to-day
For I ne er went off to make love to the boys
in the schools of athletic d splay
Heretofore when I gained the theatrical prize
but I packed up my traps a d d parted
Havin caused you great joy and but l ttle an oy
and mi htily pleased the true hearted

It is r ht then for all youn and old great and small,
Henceforth of my side and my party to be,
And each bald headed man should do all that he can
That the prize be awarded t me.
For be sure f this play be triumphant to-day
That whene er you recline at the feast or the wine,
Your neighbour will say
Give this t the bald head give that to the bald head
And take otaway
That sweetmeat, that cake, but present and bestow t
On the man with the brow of our wond rful Poet!

Muse ha in dri en afar this terrible business of war
Join with Me th chorus.
Com nain of Nuptials di ine and earthly banqu ts,
Sin in th j ys of the blessed this fold to Thee belong.
But and f Carcinu comin
Ask thee t join with his sons n choral dances,
Hearken not come n t stand not
A al beside them
Th nk f them all merely
Littl domest cal quails, ballet-dancers with wallet n k
N pped fr m the d w of goats, small,
tu ted machinery hunt rs.
Yes for their fathe declared that the drama which
Passed all his h pes, in the vening
By the cat wa trangled

These are the songs of the fa
sweet Gra es with beautiful hair
Which t w l beseem th
The poet f wisd m to chant while fitly tun
W bles th small w f spr and Mo sum o horu gains,
No, nor Melanth us th
W ll membe hi hrill disc rdant hatter
When th t gedia h rus
H ad t b th r tutored
Both f th m bein me l
Gorgons, dev u f ets, hat worsh ppers,
and ha pies,
Pests ld maids, nk f i d goats, destroyers f fishes.

Thou having spit on them lar ely and heavily
Join in the festi al dances,
Heavenly Muse beside me.

Enter TRYGAEUS HARVESTHOME, *a d* MAYFAIR.

T O what a job it was to reach the Gods!
I know I m right fatigued in both my legs.
How mall y seemed down h rel whs from above
Methou ht ye looked as bad as bad could be
But here ye look considerably worse

Enter FIRST SERVANT

1st S What master you returned! *Tr* So I m informed
1st S What ha e you g t? *Tr* Got? pains in both my legs
Faith! it s a rare long way
st S Nay tell me. *Tr* What?
st S Did you see any wandering in the air
Besides yourself? *Tr* No noth ng much to speak of
Two or three souls f dithyrambic poets.
st S What were they after? *Tr* Flitti g round for odes,
Those floati on hi h in th a ry sky affairs.
1st S Th n isn t true what peo le say about it
That when we die, we strai htway turn to stars?
Tr O yes tis. *1st S* And who the star there now?
T I n of Chios who on earth composed
Sta o the Morn " a l when he came there all
At once sal ted him as Star o the Morn"
1st S And d d you learn about those falling stars
Wh ch sparkle as they run? *T* Yes, those are some
Of the rich sta s return ng home from supper
La t rns n hand and in the lanterns f re.
B t t ke this g l at on e and lead her in
Deluge the bath and mak the water warm
Then pread th n ptial ouch for her and me
And wh n yo e fini hed h ther come again
Meanwhile I ll gi e this other to the Counc l.
1st S Wh nce ha e you bro ht these ma dens? *T* Whence? fr m heaven
st S I would t gi e three halfpence f r the Gods
If the keep brothels as we mo tal do
T No n yet e en ther some l ve by these
st S Come on then mi tress tell me must I gi e her N thin t eat? *T* O no she w ll not tou h
O r wheat and barley b ead h r wont ha been
To lap amb osia w th the Gods n hea en.
st S Lap! w ll p epa her lap then he e on earth

Exeunt SERV NT *and* H RV STHOME.

Ch O what a l cky old man!
Truly the whole f your plan
Prospers a well as it can
T (really wo l r what you ll say
when I m a brid groom spruce and gay
Ch All men w ll gaze with deli ht
Old you ll b q te
Y uthful a d p f med nd bright

Tr What when you see her tender waist
by these encircling arms embraced?
Ch Why then we ll think you happier far
than Carcinus s twistlings are.
Tr And justly too methinks for I
On beetleback essayed to fly
And rescued Hellas worn with strife
And stored your life
With pleasant joys of home and wife
With country mirth and leisure

Re enter SERVANT

1st S Well sir the girl has bathed and looks divinely
They mix the puddings and they ve made the cakes
Everything s done we only want the husband
Tr Come then and let us give Mayfair at once
Up to the Council.
1st S What do you say? Mayfair!
Is this May Fair? the Fair we kept at Brauron
When we were fresh and mellow years ago?
Tr Aye and twas work enough to catch her
1st S O!
How neat her pasterns quite a five year old
Tr (*looking round upon the audience*)
Now have you any there that I can trust?
One who will lead her safely to the Council?
(*to the* SERVANT)
What are you scribbling?
1st S Marking out a place
To pitch my tent in at the Isthmian games.
Tr Well is there none can take her? come to me then
I ll go myself and set you down amongst them
1st S Here s some one making signs
Tr Who is it?
1st S Who!
Ariphrades he wants her brought *his* way
Tr No I can t bear his dirty sloppy way
So come to me and lay those parcels down
(*Leads her forward*)
Councillors! Magistrates! behold Mayfair!
And O remember what a deal of fun
That word implies what pastimes and what feasts.
See here s a famous kitchen range she brings
Tis blacked a little for in times of Peace
The jovial Council kept its saucepans there
Take her and welcome her with joy and then
To-morrow morning let the sports begin
Then we ll enjoy the Fair in every fashion
With boxing matches and with wrestling bouts
And tricks and games while striplings soused in oil
Try the pancratium fist and leg combined
Then the third day from this we ll hold the races
The eager jockeys riding the great cars
Puffing and blowing through the lists till dashed
Full on some turning post they reel and fall
Over and over everywhere you see
The hapl ss coachmen wallowing on the plain
You lucky Magistrate receive Mayfair!
Just look how pleased he seems to introduce her
You would not thou h if you got nothing by it
No you d be holding a Reception day

Ch Truly we envy your fate
All must allow you re a great
Blessing and boon to the state
Tr Ah when your grapes you gather in
you ll know what sort of friend I ve been
Ch Nay but already tis known
Yea for already we own
You have preserved us alone
Tr I think you ll think so when you drain
a bowl of new made wine again
Ch We ll always hold you first and best
except the Gods the ever blest
Tr In truth you owe a deal to me
Trygaeus sprung from Athmone
For I ve released the burgher crew
And farmers too
From toils and troubles not a few
Hyperbolus I ve done for
1st S Now what s the next thing that we have to do?
Tr What but to dedicate her shrine with pipkins?
1st S With pipkins! like a wretched little Hermes!
Tr Well then what think you of a stall fed bull?
1st S A bull? O no! no need of bull works now
Tr Well then a great fat pig?
1st S No no
Tr Why not?
1st S Lest like Theagenes we grow quite piggish
Tr What other victim shall we have?
1st S A baa lamb
Tr A baa lamb!
1st S Yes by Zeus!
Tr But that s Ionic
That word is
1st S All the better then you see,
If any speak for war the whole assembly
Will talk Ioni and cry out Bah! Bah!
Tr Good very good
1st S And they ll be milder so
And we shall live like lambs among ourselves
And be much gentler towards our dear allies
Tr There get the sheep as quickly as you can
I ll find an altar for the sacrifice

Exeunt TRYGAEUS *and* SERVANT

Ch Sure each desi n when God and fortune speed it
Succeeds to our mind what is wanted we find
Just at the moment we need it
Tr (*returning*) The truths you mention none can doubt
for see I ve brought the altar out
Ch Then hasten the task to perform
War with its vehement storm
Seems for the instant to cease
Its soughings decrease
Shifting and veering to Peace
Tr Well here s the basket ready stored
with barley grain and wreath and sword
And here s the pan of sacred fire
the sheep alone we now require
Ch Make haste make haste if Chaeris see
He ll come here uninvited

And pipe and blow to that degree,
His winds labours needs m st be
By some small gift requited

Enter SERVANT

T Here take the ba ket and the lu tral water
And pace the alta rou d from left t right
1st S See I' e been ro nd n w tell me something else.
T Then next I ll take this torch a d dip it in
(*to the victim, as he sprinkles it*)
Shak your head sirrah
(*to the* SERVANT) bring the barley you
I'll hold the bason while you wash y ur hands.
\ w thro the corn amongst the aud ence

There

1st S
Tr What! thrown t out already?

Yes by Hermes!

1st S
There not a singl man amongst them all
B t has t least one orn I ll warrant you.
T Aye, b t the women?

If they haven t got one

1st S
They'll get it by and by

T

N w then to prayers

Who s her ? where are o r honest simple folk?
1st S H re these a e simple f lk I ll give to them
T What these good simple folk?

1st S

I fa th I th k so

Who, tho gh we ve poured such l ts of water on them
Yet stand tock still and n er budge a st p
Tr Come, let us pray nod lly g let us pra

O Peace most h ly a gust, serene,
O hea e born quee
Of th da c and so g a d th bridal throng
These ff n gs take which thy tanes make.
1st S O m t ess dear we beseech you hear
And ct t yo as the want ns do
They lo e t py at the passers by
Through th half losed door
And th n f vo h ed they a e go with speed
If you turn w n a nstant they
P po t mor a they did befo e.
B t deal not th u kindly with us
T No, by Zeus! b t d pl y s tru honest way
You pe fect entu full f rm t o ew
Who w th nstant desir
These thirtee long years ha e be n pin ng f r you.
Wh ou fi ht ngs ar st yed a d o tumults al la ed
We ll hail thee Lady f rever
And O p t e d t th whispe of doubt,
These w nde ful cle e
I g s p ns we bandy bo t
And solder nd gl th H lle es a ew
W th th ld fa h ed tru
Ehu flo nd tt mpe our mind
W th hou h f ea h ther m g nial a d kind
Moreo e p y that u ma k t place may
B f m hed each day w th goodly d splay
And for ga lic, nd cucumbers ea ly nd rare,
Pom granates, and pples heaps t be th e,
And wee little coats f r our servants to wear
And Boeotia to se d us her pigeo s and widgeons,
And her geese and her plo ers and plent ful ereels
Once more from Copa s to journey w th eels,
And for us to be hustlin and tussl ng and bustling,
With Morychus Teleas, Glaucetes, all
The gluttons together besi g ng the st ll
To purchase the fi h and then I could wish
For Mela thius to come too late f r the fair
And f r *them* to be sold and for *him* to despair
And out of his own Medea a groan
Of angu sh t borrow
I perish! I perish! bereaved of my sweet
My treasure my darling embowered in her beet"
A d f r all men to lau h at his sorrow
These things we pray O mistress, grant us these

1st S Here take the cleaver now w th cl er skill
Sla ghter the sheep

Tr

No no I must not

Why ?

1st S
Tr Peace loves not friend the sight of victims slain
Hers s a bloodless altar Take it in
And when you have slain it, brin the thi hs o t here.
There now the sheep is—sa ed for the Choregus

Exit SE ANT

Ch But you the wh le outs de with u rema ning
Lay handy a d quick these fagots of stick
Whate er is needful orda ning
Tr Now don t you think I have la d the wood
as well as most diviners could?
Ch (*admiri gly*) Yes! just what I looked f r from you.
All that is wise you can do.
All things that daring and skill
S ffice to fulfil
You can perform if you w ll
Tr (*co gh g*) Dear! how this lighted brand s smoking

yo r St lb des is nea l choking

I ll bring the table out with speed
a servant s help we hall not need *Exit*
Ch. Sure all w th dmirat on true
Will praise a man so cle r
Who passed st ch to ls d da g rs th u h
A d sa ed the h ly city too
An en red name f ever

En er S RVANT *d* TRYG EUS

1st S I e d ne the j b he e tak and cook the th ghs
While I g f tch the inwards a d th cates
T I ll see to this you h uld ha e come bef re
1st S Well he e I m I m ure I ve no been lo g
T T ke these and roa t them nicely he e s a fell w
Comi th way w th laurel r und h s head
Who can he be?

1st S

He looks an arrant h mb g

Some seer I think

Tr

No o tis Hierocles,

The oracle mongering chap from Oreus town.

Tr What when you see her tender waist
by these encircling arms embraced?
Ch Why then we ll think you happier far
than Carcinus s twistlings are
Tr And justly too methinks for I
On beetleback essayed to fly
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War with its vehement storm
Seems for the instant to cease
Its soughings decrease
Shifting and veering to Peace
Tr Well here s the basket ready stored
with barley grain and wreath and sword
And here s the pan of sacred fire
the sheep alone we now require
Ch Make haste make haste if Chaeris see
He ll come here uninvited

T 'Tis strictly forbidden.
You no ... wards can ha e
till th wo f and the lamb be united
H. Do, b our knees I beseech
T B t fruitless ar all your beseechings.
Thou w t ne er be bl
to smooth the spines of the hed hog
Come now spectators, won t ou share the mess
Aee with us?
H And I?
T You? eat your Sibyl.
L. No, b the Earth, you two sha t feast alone!
I'll snat h a piece away tis all in common.
T Strike Bakis, strike!
H I call them all to witness—
T And so d I that you re rous and gl tton
La on him with the st ck strike strik the rascal!
H.S. You manage that while I peel off th skins
Which he has gathered b his cozeni tri ks.
Now sacrifice off with ll our skins.
What, won t you? here s a crow from Oreu town!
Back t Elymnium! flutt r off shoo shoo!

Exeunt H ROCLES, TR G EUS, *and* SERVANT

Chorus

What a pleasure what a treasure
What a great deli ht to me
From th cheese and from the onions
And th helm t to be free.
For I can t enjoy battle
B t I lo e t pass m da s
With m wi and boon companions
Round the merry merry blaze
When the logs ar dry and seasoned
And the fire is burnin bri ht
And I roast th pease and chestn ts
In the embers all ali ht.
—Flirtin too w th Thratta
When m ife is out of si ht.

Ah, ther nothing half so sweet as
when the seed in the ground
God gracious rain is sendin
nd nei hbour saunters round
"O Comar hides!" he hails m
how shall we enjo the hours?
Drinkin seems t suit my fa cy
what ith these benignant showers.
Therefor let three qua ts, m mi tress,
f our kid beans be fried
Mix them nic ly up w th ba l y
nd you choicest figs pr ide
Syra run and shout to Ma es,
call him in without d lay
'Tis time to stand and dawdl
prunin out th ines to-day
Nor t b eak th lod bout them,
now th ground soakin throu h
Bring me out from h m th fi ldfare
brin m out the siskins two,
Then there ought to be some beestings,
four good plates f har beside

(Hah! unless the cat purloined them
yesterday at event de
Somethin scuffled in the pantry
something m de a noise and fuss)
If you find them, one s for father
bring the other three to us.
Ask Aeschinades to send us
myrtle branches green and strong
Bid Charinades attend us,
shouting a you pass along
Then we'll sit nd drink together
God the while refreshing blessing
All the labour f our hands."

O to watch the grape of Lemnos
S elli out its purple skin
When the merry little warblings
Of the Chirruper be n
For the Lemnian ripens early
And I watch the ju c fig
Till at last I pick and eat it
Wh n it hangeth soft and big
And I bless the friendl seasons
Which ha e made a fruit so prime
And I mix a pleasa t mi ture
Gratin in a lot of thyme
—Gro i g fat and hearty
In th genial summer clime

This is bett r than a Capta
hated of th Gods to see
Tripl -crested scarl t ested
scarlet bri ht as bright can be.
'Tis, he says, true Sardian ti ct re
which they warrant not to run
B t f e er it gets to fi ht n
thou h his scarlet coat be on
H h mself becomes as pallid
as the palest C zicene
Runnin like a tawny cockh rse
he s th first to quit the scene
Shake and quake his crests bo e him
I tood gapi while he flew
Ah but when at home the re statio ed
thi gs that can t be borne they do,
Makin up th lists unfa ly
striki out and puttin down
Names t rand m. 'T s to-morr w
that the soldiers lea e the town
One poor wretch has bou ht no ictuals,
for he knew not he must go
Till he on Pand on s statue
ried the list and found twas so,
Reading the e hi nam inse ted
off he scuds with a peet wry
This is how they treat the farmers,
b t the burghers certainly
Somewhat better godless wretches,
rogues with either shame nor—shield
Who one day if God be willing,
stri t ccount t me shall yield
For th y e wron ed me m ch and sore!

1st S What brings him here?
Tr Tis evident he comes
To raise some opposition to our truces
1st S No tis the savour of the roast attracts him
Tr Don t let us seem to notice him
1st S All right
Enter HIEROCLES
Hierocles What is this sacrifice and made to whom?
Tr Roast on don t speak hands off the haunch remember
Hi Will ye not say to whom ye sacrifice?
This tail looks right
1st S Sweet Peace! it does indeed
Hi Now then begin and hand the firstlings here
Tr It must be roasted first
Hi It s roasted now
Tr You re over busy man whoe er you are
Cut on why where s the table? bring the wine
Exit SERVANT
Hi The tongu requires a separate cut
Tr We know
Now will you please?
Hi Yes tell me
Tr Mind your business
Don t talk to us we sacrifice to Peace
Hi *O ye pitiful fools!*
Tr Pray speak for yourself my good fellow
Hi Ye who blindly perverse
with the will of the Gods unacquainted
Dare to traffic for Peace
true m n with truculent monkeys
1st S (*re entering*) O! O! O!
Tr What s the matter?
1st S I like his truculent monkeys
Hi Silly and timorous gulls
ye have trusted the children of foxes
Crafty of mind and crafty of soul
Tr You utt r impostor
O that your lungs were as hot
as a piece of the meat I am roasting!
Hi If the prophetic nymphs
have not been imposing on Bakis
No nor Bakis on men
nor the nymphs I repeat upon Bakis
Tr O perdition be yours
if you don t have done with your Bakis!
Hi Then is the hour not come
for the fetters of Peace to be loosened
No for before that hour—
Tr This piece is with salt to be sprinkled
Hi Yea it is far from the mind
of the Ever blessed Immortals
That we should cease from the strife
till the wolf and the lamb be united
Tr How you scoundrel accurst
can the wolf and the lamb be united?
Hi Doth not the beetle alarmed
emit a most horrible odour?
Doth not the wagtail yapper
produce blind young in its hurry?
So is the hour not com
for Peace to be sanctioned between us.

Tr What then what is to come?
Are ye never to cease from the battle
Always to chance it out
which most can enfeeble the other
When we might both join hands
and share the dominion of Hellas?
Hi Canst thou tutor the crab
to advance straight forward? thou canst not
Tr Wilt thou dine any more
in the Hall of Assembly? thou wilt not
No nor ever again
shall thy cheating knavery prosper
Hi Thou wilt never be able
to smooth the spines of the hedgehog
Tr Wilt thou never desist
bamboozling the people of Athens?
Hi Say what oracle taught you
to burn the thighs of the victim?
Tr This the wisest and best
delivered by Homer the poet
When they had driven afar
the detestable cloud of the battle
Then they established Peace
and welcomed her back with oblations
Duly the thighs they burned
and ate the tripe and the inwards
Then poured out the libations
and I was the guide and the leader
None to the soothsayer gave
the shining beautiful goblet
Hi Nothing I know of these
these did not come from the Sibyl
Tr Nay but wisely and well
spake Homer the excellent poet
Tribeless lawless and hearthless
is he that delighteth in bloodshed
Bloodshed of kith and kin
heart sickening horrible hateful!
Hi Take thou heed or a kite
by a trick thy attention beguiling
Down with a swoop may pounce
Tr (*to the* SERVANT) Ah! take heed really and truly
That s an alarming hint
it bodes no good to the inwards
Pour the libation in
and hand me a piece of the inwards
Hi Nay but if such is the plan
I too for myself will be caterer
Tr Pour libation! pour libation!
Hi Pour it in also for m
and rea h me a share of the inwards
Tr That is far from the mind
of the Ever blessed Immortals
Yea for before that hour—
—*you go* *we ll* pour the libation
Holy and reverend Peace
abide with thy servants forever
Hi Now fetch hither the tongue
Tr You take yours off I d advise you
Hi Pour the libation in
Tr Take that to assist the libation.
Hi What! will none of you give me some meat?

1st B Rose the rattle of war
commingled w th groans of the dying
Tr G oans of th dying?
by great Di nysus, I ll make you repent t
i n of groans of th dyin
especially s ch as are round bossed
1st B What then, what shall I sing?
you tell m the so gs you delight n
T "Then o th flesh of bee es
they feasted somethi g of *that* sort
Then a repast they served
nd what er is best for a banquet
1st B. "Then n the flesh f bee es
they feasted aweary of fi ht n
Then from the y ke they loosed
the reeking necks of th h rses.
T Good they w re tired of war and so they feasted
S gon, O sing how they were tired d feasted
1st B 'Quickly refreshed they called f r the casq es.
Tr Casks? gladly I warrant
1st B 'Out from the t wers they poured
and the roar f battle scended
Tr P rdition seize you, boy your wars a d all!
You sing of nought b t battles who s your father?
1st B Whose? mi e?
T Yes, yours, by Zeus!
st B Why Lamachus.
T L h out upon tl
Truly I marvelled nd thou ht
t myself as I heard your performa ce
This the so f som ha ker
and thwa ker d sack r of cities.
G t the pea me si g t *them* begone
Here, h r I want Cleo mus son.
You, si g before we enter sure I am
Y on t si g wars y u e too discreet a father
2nd Boy Ah! some Saea is vaunt n
the targe, whi h I i th bushes
Sadly a blameless shi ld
l ft as I fled fr m the field
T Tell me you pr tty baboon
ar you maki g a mock of your father?
2nd B \ y but my l f I preserved
T B t you shamed the parents who gave t
Well we in for su e I am that you,
Bei g you fath s son will ev rmo e
Forg t th so sang about the hield
Now th n t right my j lly mes,
that y u sh uld her remaining
M h, crunch, d b t w th ll your m ght
o mpty essels draining
W th ma ly eal attack th meal,
And saw d gnaw w th either j w
there s no advantage eally
I ha i g whit a d poli hed teeth
unless you use them freely

Ch O aye we know we won t be slow
but thanks for thus reminding
Tr Set to, set to you starving crew
you won t be always finding
Such d shes rare of cake and hare
An easy prey in open day
thus wandering unprotected
Set to, set to or soon you ll rue
a splend d chance neglected
Ch O let not a wo d f ill-omen be heard
but som f you run f r the bride
Some torches to bring while the multitudes sing
and dance and rejoice by her s de
We ll carry the husbandry implements back
our own l ttle homesteads about
When we e had our o at on and poured our liba t on and hunted Hyperbolus out
But first we ll pray to the Gods that they
M y with rich success th H llenes bless,
And that e ery field may it harvest y eld
And our garn rs shine w th the corn and wine,
Wh le our figs in plenty and peace we eat
And our w es are blest with an increase sweet
And we gather back in abu dant store
The many blessings we lost before
And the fiery steel—be it known no more
Tr Come th come my bride
Mid t the free green fields with me
Sweetly sweet abide
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Hymen Hymena us O!
Ch H ppy happy happy you
And you well deserve it too
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Semi Chorus What shall w th the bride be done,
What be do e with H rvesthome?
Semi Ch She shall yield him, one by one
All the joys of Harvest home
Semi Ch Ye to wh m the ta k belongs
Raise the happy brid g oom raise,
Bea him on with goodly songs,
Bear him on with nuptial lays.
Hymen Hym na us O!
Hym n Hyme eus O!
Semi Ch. Go nd dwell n peace
Not ca e your h es impair
W tch your figs increase
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Hymen Hyme eu O!
Sem Ch He t tout and b g
Sem Ch She a weet r fig
Tr So you all will think
When you feast and d nk.
Ch. Hymen H menaeus O!
Hymen H menaeus O!
Tr Away away good day good day
F llow me, sirs, if ye will,
And of b idecakes eat your fill.

Very lions in the city
Very foxes in the fight

Re-enter TRYGAEUS *and* SERVANT

Tr Hillo! Hillo!
What lots are coming to the wedding supper!
Here take this crest and wipe the tables down
I've no more use for that at all events
And now serve up the thrushes and the cates
And the hot rolls and quantities of hare

Enter SICKLE MAKER

Sickle Maker Where where's Trygaeus?

Tr Stewing thrushes here

S M O my best friend Trygaeus! O what blessings
Your gift of Peace has brought us Till to day
No man would give one farthing for a sickle
And now I'm selling them two pounds apiece
And my friend here sells casks for country use
Half a crown each Trygaeus freely take
As many casks and sickles as you please
And take this too (*giving money*) out of our sales and gains
We bring you these we two as wedding presents

Tr Well lay your presents down and hie you in
To join the marriage feast here comes a man
Who trades in arms he seems put out at something

Enter CREST MAKER BREASTPLATE SELLER TRUMPETER HELMET SELLER *and* SPEAR BURNISHER

Crest Maker O you've destroyed me root and branch Trygaeus

Tr How now poor wretch! what ails you? got a crestache?

C M You have destroyed my living and my trade
And this man's too and yon spear burnisher's

Tr What shall I give you then for these two crests?

C M What *will* you give?

Tr Faith I'm ashamed to say
Come there's a deal of work about this juncture
I'll give three quarts of raisins for the pair
Twill do to wipe my table down withal

C M Go in then go and fetch the raisins out
Better have that than nothing O my friend

Tr Consume the things! here take them take them off
The hairs are dropping out they're not worth having
Zounds! I'll not give one raisin for the pair

Breastplate Seller O what's the use of this habergeon now?
So splendidly got up cost forty pounds

Tr Well well you shan't lose anything by that
I'll buy it of you at its full cost price
'Twill do superbly for my chamber pan

B S Come don't be mocking at my wares and me

Tr Placing three stones anent it ain't that clever?

B S And how you blockhead can you cleanse yourself?

Tr How? slip my hands in through the portholes here
And here.

B S What both at once!

Tr Yes I'll not cheat
I'll have fair play an arm for every hole

B S Sure you won't use a forty pounder so

Tr Why not you rascal? Marry I suppose
My seat of honour's worth eight hundred shillings

B S Well fetch the silver out

Tr Plague take the thing
It galls my stern off with you I won't buy it

Trumpeter See here's a trumpet cost me two pounds ten
How in the world am I to use it now?

Tr I'll tell you how Fill up this mouth with lead
Then fix a longish rod here at the top
And there you'll have a dropping cottabus

Tru O me! he mocks me

Tr Here's another plan
Pour in the lead as I advised before
Then at the top suspend a pair of scales
With little cords and there's a famous balance
To weigh out figs for labourers on the farm

Helmet Seller Thou hast destroyed me dread unpitying Fate!
These helmets stood me in a good four pounds
What am I now to do? who'll buy them now?

Tr Take them to Egypt you can sell them there.
They're just the things they measure physic in

Tru O helmet seller we are both undone

Tr Why *he's* received no hurt

H S Received no hurt!
Pray what's the use of all these helmets now?

Tr Just clap on each a pair of ears like these
They'll sell much better then than now they will

H S O come away spear burnisher

Tr No no
I'm going to buy his spears I really am

Spear Burnisher What are you going to give?

Tr Saw them in two
I'll buy them all for vine poles ten a penny

S B The man insults us come away my friend

Tr Aye go your way for here come out the boys.
Those whom the guests have brought us I suppose
They're going to practise what they're going to sing
Come and stand here by me my boy and then
Let's hear you practise what you mean to sing

Enter a group of young BOYS

1st Boy Sing of the younger blood whose deeds —

Tr Plague take you be quiet
Singing of deeds of blood
and that you unfortunate ill starred
Wretch in the time of Peace
you're a shameful and ignorant blockhead

1st B Slowly the hosts approached
till at length with a shock of encounter[1]
Shield was dashed upon shield
and round bossed buckler on buckler

Tr Buckler? you'd better be still
how dare you be talking of bucklers?

[1] Quoting a line that occurs seven times in the *Iliad* The other lines quoted by the Boy are from Homer or in the Homeric language

1st B Rose th rattle of war
commin led with groans of the dying
T Groans of th dy ng?
by great Dionysus, I ll make you repent it
S. of groans of the dying,
especially such as are r un l bossed
1st B What, then, what shall I s n ?
you t ll me the songs you deli ht in
T "Then on the flesh of beeves
they feasted something of *that* sort
Then a repast th y served
and what ver is best for a banquet
1st B. "Then on the flesh of bee es
they feasted aweary of fight n
Then from the yok they loosed
th reekin necks of the h rses.
T Good they were tired of war and so th y feasted
Sing on, O sin how they were ti ed and fea ted
1st B "Quickly refreshed they called for the casques.
T Cas s? gladly I warrant
1st B. "Out from the tow rs they poured
and the roar of battle ascended
T Perdition seize you, bo your wars and all!
You s , of nought but battles who s your father?
1st B Whose? m e?
T Yes, yours, by Zeus!
1st B Why Lamachus.
T U h, out upon t!
Truly I marvelled and thought
to myself a l heard yo r performance
This is th son of som backer
nd th ack r and sacker of cit es.
Get to the spearme s to *them* begone.
Here, here, I want Cleonymus s son.
You, sing before we ent r sur I am
I ou t sing wars you too d screet a father
2nd Boy Ah! some Saea is vauntin,
the ta g which I in the bushes
Sadly a blameless shi ld
l ft as I fled from the fi ld "
T Tell m you pr tty baboon
a you making a n ock f your father?
2nd B N v but my *l fe* I preserved
T B t you hamed the parents who gave it
Well go in for ur I am that you,
B g our fath r son ill e rmore
Forget the son ou sang about the shield
No th n u ight m jolly rovers,
that you should, here r main g
M n h crunch, nd b t with a l your might
no empty essels drawn
W th ma ly zeal attack th meal,
And saw nd gnaw with either jaw
there s o adva tage really
I ha g white nd polished teeth
unless you use them freely

Ch O aye we know we won t be slow
b t thanks for thus remind ng
Tr Set to, set to you starving crew
you won t be always finding
Such d shes rare of cake and hare
An easy prey in open lay
thus wander ng unprotected
Set to set to or soon you ll rue
a splend d chance neglected
Ch O let not a word of ill-omen be heard
but some of you run for the br de
Some torches to brin wh le the multitudes sing
and dance and rejoice by her side
We ll carry the hu ban lry implements back
our own little homestea ls about
When we ve had our o ati n and poured our libation and hunted H perbolu s out
But first we ll pray to the Gods that they
M y with rich success t e H ll nes l less,
And that every field may its harvest yi ld
And our garners sh ne w th the corn and wine
Wh le our fi in plenty and peace we eat
And our wi es are blest with an increase sweet
And we gather back in abundant store
The many blessin s we lost before
And the fi ry steel—be it known no more
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M d t the free green fields w th me
Sweetly sweet abide
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Hym n Hymenaeus O!
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And you w ll deser e it too.
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What be done with Harvesthome?
Semi Ch She hall yield h m one by one
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Raise the happy bridegroom, raise,
Bear h m on with goodly songs,
Bear him on with nuptial lays.
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Hymen Hyme us O!
Semi Ch Go and dwell in peace
N t a care your li es impair
Watch your figs increase.
Hymen Hym naeus O!
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Semi Ch He is st ut a d b
Semi Ch She sweet r fig
T So you all will think
When you fea t and drink.
Ch. Hymen H menaeus O!
Hymen Hymenaeus O!
Tr Away away good day good day
Follow me sirs, if ye will,
And of br dec kes eat your fill

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Very foxes in the fight

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Ex. And you, your head—and there'll be twice the
    noise.
P. Well, tak a stone and knock.
Ex. Yes, I'll do that.
Boy! Boy!
P. Eh! What d you call the hoopoe "Boy"?
You should call "Whoop-ho there" not "Boy" of
    course.
Ex. O Whoop-ho there! What must I knock
    you? Whoop-ho!

A door opens in the rock, and an actor emerges, wit a beak-fronted mask. He is a Dor... Enter PLOVER ... with a long and wide g... ... beak. PEISTHETAERUS and EUELPIDES start back and EISTHETAERUS falls their bird-cage.

Plover-Page Whoever are these? Who calls my master?
Ex. Apollo shield us, what terrible ... ane!
P.P. These be two bird-catchers. O dear! O dear!
Ex. (aside) An nasty speaking, as unpleasant look
    ...!
P.P. Ye shall both die!
Ex. O we're not men.
P.P. What then?
Ex. Well, I'm the Panic-struck, a Libyan bird.
P.P. Nonsense!
Ex. No nonsense: look for yourself and see.
P.P. And he—what bird is he, come, won't you
    answer?
Pe. I, I'm a pheasant and ... llow tailed on
Ex. But O by all the Gods, whate er are you?
P.P. A servant bird.
Ex. What, vanquished by some gamecock?
I.E. ...
P.P. No, but my master, when he first
Became hoopoe prayed that I might turn
To a bird, to be his servant still.
Ex. What, does bird require serving bird?
P.P. H does, as ha in been a man, I fancy.
So when he wan to tast Phaleron sardines,
I run for the sardines, catch him a dish.
Does he want soup then where the pot and ladle
I run for the ladle.
Ex. A regular running partridge.
Now hark Plover, just run in and call
Your master out.
P.P. Great Zeus! he has just been eatin
Myrtles and mid... es, and is gone to roost.
Ex. But still, do wake him.
P.P. Well, I know he won't
Like to be waked, but for your sake I'll do it.

Exit the PLOVER ...

Pe. Confound the bird! he frightened me to death.
Ex. O dear! O dear! my heart went pit a pat
My daw's gone too.
Pe. (angrily) Gone! O you coward you,
You let him go!
Ex. Well, didn't you fall down,
And let your crow go?
Pe. No, I didn't. ...
Ex. Where is he then?
Pe. She flew away herself.
Ex. You didn't let her go. You're a brave boy!

Enter HOOPOE upon the ..., which bears a small copse ... in which is ... the Nightingale lies asleep. The HOOPOE has no feathers except on head and wings.

Hoopoe Throw wide the wood, that I may issue forth!
Ex. O Heracles, why what in the world is this?
What feathering's here? What style of triple crest...?
Ho. Who be the folk that seek me?
Ex. The Twelve Gods
Would seem to have wrought ... your ruin.
Ho. What, do you jeer me
Seeing the way I'm feathered? Strangers, I
Was once a man.
Ex. It's not at you we're laughing.
Ho. What is it then?
Ex. Your beak looks rather funny.
Ho. This is the way that Sophocles disfigures
The manly form of Tereus in his play.
Ex. What, are you Tereus? Are you bird or peacock?
Ho. I am a bird.
Ex. Then, where are all your feathers?
Ho. They've fallen off!
Ex. What! from disease or why?
H. No, but in winter time all birds are wont
To moult their feathers, and then fresh ones grow
But tell me what ye are.
Ex. We? mortal men.
H. And of what race?
Ex. Whence the brave galleys come.
Ho. Not dicasts, are ye?
Ex. No, the other sort.
We're anti-dicasts.
Ho. Grows that seedling there?
Ex. Are in the country you can find a few
If you search closely.
H. But what brings you hither?
Ex. To talk with you a little.
H. What about?
Ex. You were a man at first, as we are now
And had your creditors, as we have now
And loved to shirk your debts, as we do now
And then you changed your nature and became
A bird, and flew round land and sea, and know
All that men feel, and all that birds feel too.
That's why we are come suppliants here, to ask
If you can tell us of some city soft
As ... ... within.
H. Seek ye a mightier than the Cranaan town?
Ex. A mightier, no, a more commodious, yes.
Ho. Aristocratic?
Ex. Anything but that!
I loathe the very name of Scellias' son.[1]
H. What sort of city would ye like?
Ex. Why one

[1] Aristocrates, chosen because of his name. He took ... in the ol... ...

THE BIRDS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Euelpides	A Guard
Peisthetaerus	Iris
Trochilus *servant of Epops*	A Herald
Epops the Hoopoe	A Sire Striker
A Priest	Cinesias *a Dithyrambic Poet*
A Poet	A Sycophant
An Oracle Monger	Prometheus
Meton a Geometrician	Poseidon
A Commissioner	Triballian
A Statute Seller	Heracles
A Messenger	A Servant of Peisthetaerus

Chorus of Birds

A desolate scene with a tree and a rock Enter PEISTHETAERUS *carrying a crow and* EUELPIDES *carrying a jackdaw*

Euelpides Straight on do you bid me go where the tree stands?
Peisthetaerus O hang it all! mine s croaking back again
Eu Why are we wandering up and down you rogue?
This endless spin will make an end of *us*
Pe To think that I poor fool at a crow s bidding
Should trudge about an hundred miles and more!
Eu To think that I poor wretch at a daw s bidding
Should wear the very nails from off my feet!
Pe *Why where we are I ve not the least idea*
Eu Could you from hence find out your fatherland?
Pe No that would pose even—Execestides!
Eu O here s a nuisance!
Pe Go *you* there then friend
Eu I call Philocrates a regular cheat
The fool that sells the bird trays in the market
He swore these two would lead us straight to Tereus
The hoopoe made a bird in that same market [1]
So then this daw this son of Tharreleides
We bought for an obol and that crow for three
But what knew they? Nothing but how to—bite!
Where are you gaping now? Do you want to lead us
Against the rocks? There s no road here I tell you
Pe No nor yet here not even the tiniest path
Eu Well but what says your crow about the road?
Pe By Zeus she croaks quite differently now
Eu *(shouting) What does she say about the road?*
Pe She says
She ll gnaw my fingers off that s all she says
Eu Now isn t it a shame that when we are here
Ready and willing as two men can be
To go to the ravens we can t find the way
For we are sick spectators with a sickness
Just the reverse of that which Sacas has
He no true townsman would perforce press in
Whilst we with rights of tribe and race unchallenged
Townsmen mid townsmen no man scaring us
Spread both our—feet and flew away from home
Not that we hate our city as not being
A prosperous mighty city free for all
To spend their wealth in paying fines and fees
Aye the cicalas chirp upon the boughs
One month or two but our Athenians chirp
Over their lawsuits all their whole life long
That s why we are journeying on this journey now
Trudging along with basket pot and myrtles
To find some quiet easy going spot
Where we may settle down and dwell in peace
Tereus the hoopoe is our journey s aim
To learn if he in any place he has flown to
Has seen the sort of city that we want
Pe You there!
Eu What now?
Pe My crow keeps croaking upwards
Ever so long
Eu And here s my jackdaw gaping
Up in the air as if to show me something
There must be birds about I am sure of that
Let s make a noise and we shall soon find out
Pe Then harkye bang your leg against the rock

[1] The hoopoe is really an actor who has obtained his plumage in the bird market where these birds were also bought they might therefore be expected to find him Pandion of Athens had two daughters Procne and Philomela Tereus of Thrace married the one and outraged the other the sister killed his son Itys and served him up for his father s dinner he pursued them and they were changed Tereus into a hoopoe Procne into a nightingale and Philomela into a swallow

Pr Hi!
Ex Well?
P Keep quiet.
Ex Why?
P The Hoopoe here
Is going to favour us with another song.
The birds call by the Hoopoe and Nightingale are given, the Nightingale's song being imitated, as before, by the flute.
Ho Whoop-ho! Whoop-ho!
Whoop-hoop-hoop-hoop-hoop-ho!
Ho Ho! Ho! Come, come, come, come, come!
(The land birds)
Come hither any bird with plumage like my own;
Come hither ye that batten on the acres newly sown,
On the acres by the farmer neatly sown;
And the myriad tribes that feed on the barley and the seed,
The tribes that lightly fly, giving out a gentle cry;
And ye who round the clod, in the furrow-riven sod,
With voices sweet and low, twitter flutter to and fro,
Singing "Tio, tio, tio, tiotinx";
And ye who in the gardens a pleasant harvest glean,
Lurking in the branches of the ivy ever green;
And ye who top the mountains with gay and airy flight;
And ye who in the olive and the arbutus delight;
Come hither one and all, come flying to our call,
"Trioto, trioto, totobrinx."
(The marsh birds)
Ye that skim up the marshes, shrilly voiced,
And the deep water glens of the fens,
Or on Marathon's expanse haunt the lea, fair to see,
Or career o'er the swamps, dewy moist,
And the bird with the gay mottled plumes, come away,
Francolin! Francolin! come away!
(The sea fowl)
Ye with the halcyons flitting delightedly
Over the surge of the infinite Sea,
Come to the great Revolution awaiting us,
Hither, come hither, come hither to me.
Hither, to listen to wonderful words,
Hither we summon the taper-necked birds.
For hither has come a shrewd old file,
Such a deep old file, such a sharp old file,
His thoughts are new, new deeds he'll do,
Come here, and confer with this shrewd old file.
Come hither! Come hither! Come hither!
Toro-toro-toro-torotinx!
Kikkabau, kikkabau!
Toro-toro-toro-toro-lililinx!
P See any bird?
Ex By Apollo no, not I,
Though up I gaze with mouth and eyes wide open.
Pe Methinks the Hoopoe played the lapwing's trick.
Went in the copse, and whooped, and whooped for nothing.
H Torotinx. Torotinx.
P Comrade, here's a bird approaching
coming to receive our visit.

*Four birds pass before the audience and Ex-
ameters on the other side*
Ex Aye by Zeus, what bird do you call it?
Surely not a peacock, is it?
Pr That the Hoopoe here will teach us.
Prithee friend what bird is he?
Ho That is not a common object,
such as you can always see
That's a marsh bird.
Ex Lovely creature! nice and red like flaming flame.
H So he should be, for Flamingo
is the lovely creature's name.
Ex Hi there!
P What? The row you're making!
Ex Here's another full in view.
Pe Aye by Zeus, another truly
with a foreign aspect too.
Who is he the summit ascending,
Muse prophetical, wondrous bird?
Ho He's a Median.
Pe He a Median! Heracles, the thing's absurd.
How on earth without a camel
could a Median hither fly?
Ex Here they're coming; here's another
with his crest erected high.
Pe Goodness gracious, that's a hoopoe;
yes, by Zeus, another one!
Are not you the only Hoopoe?
H I'm his grandsire; he's the son
Of the Philoclean hoopoe;
as with you a name will pass,
Callias siring Hipponicus, Hipponicus Callias.
Pe O then that is Callias, is it?
How his feathers moult away!
Ho Aye the simple generous creature,
he's to parasites a prey.
And the females flock around him,
plucking out his feathers too.
Pe O Poseidon, here's another;
here's a bird of brilliant hue!
What's the name of this, I wonder?
Ho That's a Glutton styled by us.
Pe Is there then another Glutton
than our own Cleonymus?
Ex Our Cleonymus, I fancy
would have thrown his crest away.
Pe But what means the crest-equipment
of so many birds, I pray?
Are they going to race in armour?
Ho No, my worthy friend, they make
Each his dwelling, like the Carians,
on the crests for safety's sake.
Enter chorus of twenty four birds all crowding together
Pe O Poseidon, what the mischief!
see the birds are everywhere
Fluttering onward.
Ex King Apollo, what a cloud! O! O! look there,
Now we cannot see the entrance
for the numbers crowding in.

Where my worst trouble would be such as this
A friend at daybreak coming to my door
And calling out O by Olympian Zeus
Take your bath early then come round to me
You and your children to the wedding banquet
I'm going to give Now pray don't disappoint me
Else keep your distance when my money's—
gone
Ho Upon my word you are quite in love with
troubles!
And *you*?
Pe I love the like
Ho But tell me what
Pe To have the father of some handsome lad
Come up and chide me with complaints like these
Fine things I hear of you Stilbonides
You met my son returning from the baths
And never kissed or hugged or fondled him
You his paternal friend! You're a nice fellow
Ho Poor Poppet you are in love with ills indeed
Well there's the sort of city that ye want
By the Red Sea
Eu Not by the sea! Not where
The Salaminian with a process server
On board may heave in sight some early morn
But can't you mention some Hellenic town?
Ho Why don't ye go and settle down in Elis
At Lepreus?
Eu Leprous! I was never there
But for Melanthius' sake I loathe the name
Ho Well then the Opuntians up in Locris there's
The place to dwell in!
Eu I become Opuntius!
No thank you no not for a talent of gold
But this this bird life here you know it well
What is this like?
Ho A pleasant life enough
Foremost and first you don't require a purse
Eu There goes a grand corrupter of our life!
Ho Then in the gardens we enjoy the myrtles
The cress the poppy the white sesame
Eu Why then ye live a bridegroom's jolly life
Pe Oh! Oh!
O the grand scheme I see in the birds' reach
And power to grasp it if ye'd trust to me!
Ho Trust you in what?
Pe What? First don't fly about
In all directions with your mouths wide open
That makes you quite despised With *us* for in
stance
If you should ask the flighty people there
Who is that fellow? Teleas would reply
The man's a bird a flighty feckless bird
Inconsequential always on the move
Ho Well blamed i' faith but what we ought to do
Tell us
Pe Live all together found one State
Ho What sort of State are birds to found I wonder
Pe Aye, say you so? You who have made the most
Idiotic speech look down
Ho I do
Pe Look up
Ho I do
Pe Twirl round your head
Ho Zeus! I shall be
A marvellous gainer if I twist my neck!
Pe What did you see?
Ho I saw the clouds and sky
Pe And is not that the Station of the Birds?
Ho Station?
Pe As one should say their habitation
Here while the heavens revolve and yon great dome
Is moving round ye keep your Station still
Make this your city fence it round with walls
And from your Station is evolved your State
So ye'll be lords of men as now of locusts,
And Melian famine shall destroy the Gods
Ho Eh! how?
Pe The Air's betwixt the Earth and Sky
And just as we if we would go to Pytho
Must crave a grant of passage from Boeotia
Even so when men slay victims to the Gods
Unless the Gods pay tribute ye in turn
Will grant no passage for the savoury steam
To rise through Chaos, and a realm not theirs
Ho Hurrah!
O Earth! gods traps and nets and gins and snares,
This is the nattiest scheme that e'er I heard of!
So with your aid I'm quite resolved to found
The city if the other birds concur
Pe And who shall tell them of our plan?
Ho Yourself
O they're not mere barbarians as they were
Before I came I've taught them language now
Pe But how to call them hither?
Ho That's soon done
I've but to step within the coppice here
And wake my sleeping nightingale and then
We'll call them both together Bless the birds
When once they hear our voices they'll come
running
Pe You darling bird now don't delay one instant
O I beseech you get at once within
Your little copse and wake the nightingale!
Ho Awake my mate!
Shake off thy slumbers and clear and strong
Let loose the floods of thy glorious song
The sacred dirge of thy mouth divine
For sore wept Itys thy child and mine
Thy tender trillings his name prolong
With the liquid note of thy tawny throat
Through the leafy curls of the woodbine sweet
The pure sound mounts to the heavenly seat
And Phoebus lord of the golden hair
As he lists to thy wild plaint echoing there
Draws answering strains from his ivoried lyre
Till he stirs the dance of the heavenly choir
And calls from the blessed lips on high
Of immortal Gods a divine reply
To the tones of thy witching melody
The sound of a flute is heard within imitating the nightingale's song
Eu O Zeus and King the little birdie's voice!
O how its sweetness honied all the copse!

ou uld slay tw worthy per ns
kinsmen cla sm n of my mate?
len ho ever sought to harm y u
wo ld v u tear and lacer te?
Ch Why I onder sh ld spare them
m e than n ng beasts of prey?
hall e find f v geance
n mi s m re rank than they?
H Enemies I grant by nature
ery friend in hea t and w ll
I e they me th k dly p pose
ef l le so s to n til
Ch What they come with w d ff e d h p?
Wh t y u really th uppose
They ill teach us u ef l lessons
th y u fathers fathers foes?
H Y t toel e folk foema
ery usef l h ts may show
Thus, that f ret ht b g ss f ty
f m a fr d we ne r should k w
But th truth f r d pon u e y quickly by
foe
I n e it is that all the Cit e
t ught by foe and n t by f iend
Learn to b ld th m sh ps f battl
and their l fty w lls xt l
So by th a foeman s teach n
ch ld e h me d wealth defen l
Ch Well I reall th k tis better
th t the r r d we sh l k w
I admit that som thi u eful
m y b ta ht us by foe
P (*t* ELELP) N v th ang g mor
la k
o v had b tter j t dr w ba k
Ho (*t* H) This ight and friendly co d ct
su h as I d ser e fr m y
Ch Well I m e th t e ha e er
go again t y h thert
P N th var g ing a deal m e peaceful
n th tim th pot t gr und
N may l e th platte st ai
N v b t th spit we had best r ta n
W lki g th th campm t bou d
Letting ou t ht l gla ces kim
O th edg of th pot t p r m
N e a thought f fl ght m t trik us.
Eu W ll but t ll m s ppose v e d e
Wh i th ld ll u bod l ?
P They shall be b ried n Cer m cus,
That ll be d n at th p bli t
For I say that l e lost
G lla tly fi ht g the p bli foe
(Yea ll t ll th comma d s so)
Galla tly fight g at O ea
Ch I' ll ba k fall back t y k o m re,
And stand t ease ve tood befo e
And lay you wrath n th g d n li e
W th your a gry mood sa ar or sh ld
W ll sk the wh l wh th m may be
And h nc th y com d with wh t des gn
H y Hoopoe h yl t you I speak

Ho What is it that to learn you seek?
Ch Whence are these visito s and who?
Ho From cl ver Hellas strangers t o
Ch What s their aim? Canst thou tell
Why they came Here to dwell?
Ho Love of you Love of your
Life and ays Was the lure
Her they fain W uld rema n
Comr des true All their days.
Ch Hey hey hat do you say?
What is the t le they t ll?
Ho In b ef
'Ti somethin more than pa t bel ef
Ch But wherefore is he come? What is it
He seeks to compass by his visit?
Think you he s got some cunning plan
Whereby all ed with us he can
Assist a friend or harm a foe?
What brings h m her I d like to know
Ho Too great too g eat fo thought or words,
The bliss h promise the birds.
All thin s are yours, he says hate er
Exists in spa e both here and there
A d to and fro and everywhere
Ch M d a l ttle eh?
H More sane than words can say
Ch W de aw ke?
Ho Wid s day
The subtlest cu nin est fox
All cheme in nt on er ft v t wisdom paradox
Ch H s peech hi speech bid him begin it
The th g you how xcite me so
I m fit to fly this very minute
Ho No you ar d you take back th s pa oply
A d h g it up God bless it out of s ght
With th kit hen ther besid th J ck.
B t y u (*t* I TH T ERU) th thing we sum
m ned them to hear
E pou d decla e
P By Apollo n not I
U le th y pledge me such a treaty pledge
As that mall ja kan pes wh makes the swords
Pledged with his f to wit that they ll not b te
me
N r pull me about n s at h my—
Ch F e f shame!
N t*th* ? o n !
P *My eyes* I was going to say
Ch I pledge t
P S ear!
Ch I wear n these e nd t ns
So may I w by ry j dg ote
And the wh le Theatr s
P *And so y u sh ll*
Ch B t f I m fals then by o e vote alo e
H O y !O yes! H pl tes, t k up y a ms
And ma h b k h m a ds there await the orders
W r go ng to p bl h o th t e boards
Ch Full f wiles, full f guiles, t all time in all
way
Ar the hild en f Me t ll we ll hear what h says.
Th u hast haply det cted

Pe Here you see a partridge coming
there by Zeus a francolin
Here a widgeon onward hurries
there s a halcyon sure as fate
Eu Who s behind her?
Pe That s a clipper he s the lady halcyon s mate
Eu Can a clipper be a bird then?
Pe Sporgilus is surely so
Here s an owl
Eu And who to Athens brought an owl I d like to know
Pe Jay and turtle lark and sed ebird
thyme finch ring-dove first and then
Rock dove stock dove cuckoo falcon
fiery crest and willow wren
Lammergeyer porphyrion kestrel
waxwing nuthatch water hen
Eu (*singing*) Ohó for the birds Oho! Ohó!
Oho for the *blackbirds* ho!
How they twitter how they go
shrieking and screaming to and fro
Goodness! are they going to charge us?
They are gazing here and see
All their beaks they open widely
Pe That is what occurs to me
Chorus Wh h wh wh wh wh wh wh where *may he be*
that was calling for me? In what locality pastureth he?
Ho I am ready waiting here
never from my friends I stir
Ch Te te te te te te te te teach me I pray in an amicable way
what is the news you have gotten to say
Ho News amazing! News auspicious!
News delightful safe and free!
Birds! Two men of subtlest genius
hither have arrived to me
Ch Who! What! When! say that again
Ho Here I say have come two elders
travelling to the birds from man
And the stem they are bringing with them
of a most stupendous plan
Ch You who have made the greatest error
since my callow life began
What do you say?
Ho Now don t be nervous
Ch What is the thing you have done to me?
Ho I ve received two men enamoured
of your sweet society
Ch You have really dared to do it?
Ho Gladly I the deed avow
Ch And the pair are now amongst us?
Ho Aye if I m amongst you now
Ch O! O! Out upon you!
We are cheated and betrayed
we have suffered shame and wrong!
For our comrade and our friend
who has fed with us so long
He has broken every oath and his holy plighted troth
And the old social customs of our clan
He has led us unawares into wiles and into snares
He has given us a prey all helpless and forlorn
To those who were our foes
from the time that they were born
To vile and abominable Man!
But for him our bird companion
comes a reckoning by and by
As for these two old deceivers
they shall suffer instantly
Bit by bit we ll tear and rend them
Pe Here s a very horrid mess
Eu Wretched man twas you that caused it
you and all your cleverness!
Why you brought me I can t see
Pe Just that you might follow me
Eu Just that I might die of weeping
Pe What a foolish thing to say!
Weeping will be quite beyond you
when your eyes are pecked away
Ch On! On! In upon them!
Make a very bloody onset
spread your wings about your foes,
Assail them and attack them
and surround them and enclose
Both both of them shall die
and their bodies shall supply
A rare dainty pasture for my beak
For never shall be found any distant spot of ground
Or shadowy mountain covert or foamy Ocean wave
Or cloud in Ether floating
which these reprobates shall save
From the doom that upon them I will wreak
On then on my flying squadrons
now s the time to tear and bite
Tarry ye not an instant longer
Brigadier advance our right
Eu Here it comes! I m off confound them
Pe Fool why can t you remain with me?
Eu What! that these may tear and rend me?
Pe How can you hope from birds to flee?
Eu Truly I haven t the least idea
Pe Then it is I the affair must guide
Seize we a pot and the charge awaiting
here we will combat side by side
Eu Pot! and how can a pot avail us?
Pe Never an owl will then come near
Eu What of these birds of prey with talons?
Pe Snatch up a spit like a hoplite s spear
Planting it firmly there before you
Eu What shall I do about my eyes?
Pe Take a platter or take a saucer
holding it o er them buckler wise
Eu What a skilful neat contrivance!
O you clever fello you
In your military science Nicias you far outdo!
Ch Eleleleu! advance! no loitering
level your beaks and charge away
Shatter the pot at once to pieces
worry and scratch and tear and flay!
Ho O whatever is your purpose? is your villainy so great

Yet would slay two worthy persons,
kinsmen clansmen of my mate?
Men ho e er sou ht to harm you
would you tear and lacerate?
Ch. Wh I under should w spa e them
more than ra en n beasts of prey?
Shall e ever find for vengeance
enemies mor rank than they?
H E emies I gra t I natu e
y rs fr nds n heart and w ll
Pe they com w th kindl purpose
useful lessons to in til
Ch. What they come w th words of friendship?
What you really then suppose
They will teach s useful lessons,
th y our fathers fathers foes?
H Yet t cle er folk a foeman
very useful hints ma show
This that fores ht brings us saf ty
from a friend we ne er sho ld know
B th truth is forced upon us, ry qu ckl by a foe
Hence t is that all th Cit es
tau ht b foe a d not b friend
Learn to build them hips of battle
nd their l fty walls extend
So by this, a foeman s tea hi g
child en, hom and wealth d f nd
Ch. W ll, I read think t s better
that their fr nd we should know
I admit that something useful
may be t u ht u b a foe.
Pe (*t* *the chorus*) N th an er grows more sla k
now we had better ju t draw back
H (*to* c o t) Thu ght and friendly ond ct
such as I desery from you
Ch. W ll, I am su e that w ha
go ea n t you hithe to.
Pe N w the ar growing a deal mo e pea ef l,
now the time th por t ground
Now may lowe the platters twain
N y but th spit had best t n
Walki g w thin th neampm nt bound
Lettin ou at hful glan es lim
O er th edge of th pot t p rim
N er thou ht f fli ht must t ke us.
Eu W ll but tell m suppose we di
Where n th w rld w ll ou bodies li ?
Pe They shall be bu ed n Cerame cus
That ill be done t th public ost
For ar that ou fi es w lost
Gala tl fi ht g the public foe
(Yea, w ll t ll th command rs so)
Gala tl fi h in t Ornea
Ch Fall back, fall ba k to our a k on e more
And st nd t ease tood before.
W h ou g y mood a warr or should
W ll sk the wh le ho th men ma be
And wh ce they om and t hat design
H y H wpoe h vl to you I speak.

H What is it that to learn you seek?
Ch Whence are these visitors and who?
Ho From cl er Hellas stran ers two.
Ch. What th ir a m? Canst thou tell
Why the came Here to dwell?
Ho Love of y u Lo of your
Life and ways Was the lure
Here they fain Would remain
Comrades true All the r days.
Ch Hey hey what do you say?
What is the tale they tell?
Ho In bri f
'Tis somethin more than pa t belief
Ch But wherefo e is he com ? What is it
He seeks to compass by his visit?
Think you he s got some cunning plan
Whereby allied w th us h can
Assist a friend or harm a foe?
What brings h m here I d like to kn w
Ho Too great too great for thought or words,
The bliss h promises the bi ds.
All things re yours, he says, whate r
Exists in space, both here and there
And to and fro, and e erywhere.
Ch M d little eh?
Ho More sane than words can say
Ch W de awake?
Ho Wide as day
The subtlest cunnin est f x,
All scheme in nt on craft w t wisdom paradox.
Ch H speech, his peech bid him begin it
Th things you how excite me so
I m fit to fly this ery minute
H Now you and you take back thi panoply
And han t up God bless it out of sight
W thi th *kitchen there beside th Jack*
But you (*to* e *speaker* s) the things we sum
mon ed them to hear
Expound decla e
P By Apollo no not I
Unless the pledge me such treaty pledge
As that small ja kanapes who makes the swords
Pledged with his w fe to wit that they ll not b te
m
No pull m about nor scratch my—
Ch F'e, for shame!
N t *this*? no, no!
P *My eyes* I was going to say
Ch I pledge it
Pe S ea !
Ch I swear on these cond tions
So may I wi by e ery jud s ote
And the h l Theatr s.
Pe *A d so yo shall*
Ch But f I m false then by one ote lone
H O yes! O es! *Hoplites*, take up your arms
And ma h ba k hom wa ds there await the o d rs
We going t publi h on th notic board
Ch Full of wiles, full f gu les, at all times, in all ways,
Are th children of Men till we ll hear what he says.
Thou hast haply detected

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there by Zeus a francolin
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Eu Who s behind her?
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Ho Aye if I m amongst you now
Ch O! O! Out upon you!
We are cheated and betrayed
we have suffered shame and wrong!
For our comrade and our friend
who has fed with us so long
He has broken every oath and his holy plighted troth
And the old social customs of our clan
He has led us unawares into wiles and into snares
He has given us a prey all helpless and forlorn
To those who were our foes
from the time that they were born
To vile and abominable Man!
But for him our bird companion
comes a reckoning by and by
As for these two old deceivers
they shall suffer instantly
Bit by bit we ll tear and rend them
Pe Here s a very horrid mess.
Eu Wretched man twas you that caused it
you and all your cleverness!
Why you brought me I can t see
Pe Just that you might follow me
Eu Just that I might die of weeping
Pe What a foolish thing to say!
Weeping will be quite beyond you
when your eyes are pecked away
Ch On! On! In upon them!
Make a very bloody onset
spread your wings about your foes
Assail them and attack them
and surround them and enclose
Both both of them shall die
and their bodies shall supply
A rare dainty pasture for my beak
For never shall be found any distant spot of ground
Or shadowy mountain covert or foamy Ocean wave
Or cloud in Ether floating
which these reprobates shall save
From the doom that upon them I will wreak
On then on my flying squadrons
now s the time to tear and bite
Tarry ye not an instant longer
Brigadier advance our right
Eu Here it comes! I m off confound them
Pe Fool why can t you remain with me?
Eu What! that these may tear and rend me?
Pe How can you hope from birds to flee?
Eu Truly I haven t the least idea
Pe Then it is I the affair must guide
Seize we a pot and the charge awaiting
here we will combat side by side
Eu Pot! and how can a pot avail us?
Pe Never an owl will then come near
Eu What of these birds of prey with talons?
Pe Snatch up a spit like a hoplite s spear
Planting it firmly there before you
Eu What shall I do about my eyes?
Pe Take a platter or take a saucer
holding it over them buckler wise
Eu What a skilful neat contrivance!
O you clever fellow you
In your military science Nicias you far outdo!
Ch Flelelcu! advance! no loitering
level your beaks and charge away
Shatter the pot at once to pieces
worry and scratch and tear and flay!
Ho O whatever is your purpose? is your villainy so great

Pe. But the strongest and clearest of proofs is that Zeus
who at present is Lord of the sky
Stands wearing as Royalty's emblem and badge
an Eagle erect on his head;
Our Lady an owl; and Apollo forsooth
as lackey a falcon instead.
Eu. By Demeter 'tis true that is just what they do
but tell me the reason, I pray.
Pe. That the bird may be ready and able whenever
the sacrificed innards we lay
As custom demands, in the deity's hands,
to seize before Zeus on the fare.
And none by the Gods, but all by the Birds,
were accustomed aforetime to swear.
And Lampon will vow by the Goose even now
whenever he's going to cheat you.
So holy and mighty they deemed you of old
with so deep a respect did they treat you!
Now they treat you as knaves,
and as fools, and as slaves;
Yea they pelt you as though ye were mad.
No safety for you can the Temples ensure
For the bird-catcher sets his nooses and nets,
And his traps, and his toils, and his bait and his lure
And his lime-covered rods in the shrine of the God!
Then he takes you, and sets you for sale in the lump
And the customers, buying come poking and prying
And twitching and trying
To feel if your bodies are tender and plump.
And if they decide on your flesh to sup
They don't just roast you and serve you up,
But over your bodies, as prone ye lie
They grate their cheese and their silphium too,
And oil and vinegar add
Then a gravy luscious and rich they brew
And pour it in soft warm streams over you,
As though ye were carrion noisome and dry.
Ch. O man, 'tis indeed a most pitiful tale
Thou hast brought to our ears and I can but bewail
Our fathers' demerit
Who born such an Empire as this to inherit
Have lost it, have lost it for me!
But now thou art come, by good Fortune's decree,
Our Saviour to be
And under thy charge, whatsoever befall,
I will place myself, and my nestlings, and all.
Now therefore do you tell us what we must do
since life is not worth our retaining
Unless we be Lords of the world as before
our ancient dominion regaining.
Pe. Then first I propose that the Air you enclose
and the space betwixt the Earth and the sky
Encircling it all with the brick-builded wall,
like Babylon's, solid and high
And there you must place the abode of your race
and make them one State and one nation.
Eu. O Porphyrion! O Cebriones!
how it peers out, the fortification!
Pe. When the wall is complete send a messenger fleet
the empire from Zeus to reclaim.
And if he deny, or be slow to comply,
nor retreat in confusion and shame
Proclaim ye against him a Holy War
and announce that no longer below
On their lawless amours through these terrors of yours,
will the Gods be permitted to go.
No more through the air (to their Alopes fair
their Alcmenas, their Semeles wending)
May they post in hot love as of old from above,
for if ever you catch them descending
You will clap on their dissolute persons a seal
their evil designs to prevent!
And then let another ambassador bird
to men with this message be sent
That the Birds being Sovereigns, to them must be paid
all honour and worship divine
And the Gods for the future to them be postponed.
Now therefore assort and combine
Each God with a bird whichever will best
with his nature and attributes suit.
If to Queen Aphrodite a victim ye slay,
first sacrifice grain to the coot;
If a sheep to Poseidon ye slay, to the duck
let wheat as a victim be brought
And a big honey-cake for the cormorant make
if ye offer to Heracles aught.
Bring a ram for King Zeus? But ye first must produce
for our King let the gold-crested wren
A masculine midge full formed and entire
to be sacrificed duly by men.
Eu. I am tickled and pleased with the sacrificed midge.
Now thunder away great Zan!
Ch. But men, will they take us for Gods, and not daws,—
do we really believe that they can—
If they see us on wings flying idly about?
Pe. Don't say such ridiculous things!
Why Hermes, and lots of the deities too,
go flying about upon wings.
There is Victory bold on her pinions of gold
and then, by the Powers, there is Love
And Iris, says Homer, shoots straight through the skies,
with the ease of a terrified dove.
Eu. And the thunderbolt flies upon wings, I surmise
what if Zeus upon us let it fall?
Pe. But suppose that mankind being stupid and blind
should account you as nothing at all,
And still in the Gods of Olympus believe—
why then like a cloud shall a swarm
Of sparrows and rooks settle down on their stooks,
and devour all the seed in the farm.

Done for Zeus.

Something good for the Birds which we never
suspected
Some power of achievement too high
For my own shallow wit by itself to descry
But if aught you espy
Tell it out for whatever of advantage shall fall
To ourselves by your aid shall be common to all
So expound us the plan you have brought us my
man
not doubting it seems of success
And don t be afraid for the treaty we made
we won t be the first to transgress
Pe I am hot to begin and my spirit within
is fermenting the tale to declare
And my dough I will knead for there s nought to
impede Boy bring me a wreath for my hair
And a wash for my hands
Eu Why what mean these commands?
Is a dinner in near contemplation?
Pe No dinner I ween tis a *speech* that I mean
a stalwart and brawny oration
Their spirit to batter and shiver and shatter
(*To the* BIRDS) So sorely I grieve for your lot
Who once in the prime and beginning of time
were Sovereigns—
Ch We Sovereigns! of what?
Pe Of all that you see of him and of me
of Zeus up above on his throne
A lineage older and nobler by far
than the Titans and Cronos ye own
And than Earth
Ch And than Earth!
P By Apollo tis true
Ch And I never had heard it before!
Pe Because you ve a blind uninquisitive mind
unaccustomed on Aesop to pore
The lark had her birth so he says before Earth
then her father fell sick and he died
She laid out his body with dutiful care
but a grave she could nowhere provide
For the Earth was not yet in existence at last
by urgent necessity led
When the fifth day arrived the poor creature
contrived
to bury her sire in her head
Eu So the sire of the lark give me leave to remark
on the crest of a headland lies dead
Pe If therefore by birth ye are older than Earth
if before all the Gods ye existed
By the right of the firstborn the sceptre is yours
your claim cannot well be resisted
Eu I advise you to nourish and strengthen your
beak
and to keep it in trim for a stroke
Zeus won t in a hurry the sceptre restore
to the woodpecker tapping the oak
Pe In times prehistoric tis easily proved
by evidence weighty and ample
That Birds and not Gods were the Rulers of men
and the Lords of the world for example
Time was that the Persians were ruled by the Cock,
a King autocratic alone

The sceptre he wielded or ever the names
Megabazus Darius were known
And the Persian he still by the people is called
from the Empire that once was his own
Eu And thus to this hour the symbol of power
on his head you can always detect
Like the Sovereign of Persia alone of the Birds,
he stalks with tiara erect
Pe So mighty and great was his former estate
so ample he waxed and so strong
That still the tradition is potent and still
when he sings in the morning his song
At once from their sleep all mortals upleap
the cobblers the tanners the bakers,
The potters the bathmen the smiths and the
shield and the musical instrument makers
And some will at eve take their sandals and leave
Eu I can answer for that to my cost
'Twas all through his crowing at eve that my cloak
the softest of Phrygians I lost
I was asked to the Tenth day feast of a child
and I drank ere the feast was begun
Then I take my repose and anon the cock crows
so thinking it daybreak I run
To return from the City to Halimus town
but scarce I emerge from the wall
When I get such a whack with a stick on my back
from a rascally thief that I fall
And he skims off my cloak from my shoulders or
e er for assistance I m able to bawl
Pe Then a Kite was the Sovereign of Hellas of old
and ruled with an absolute sway
Ch The Sovereign of Hellas!
Pe And taught by his rule
we wallow on earth to this day
When a Kite we espy
Eu By Bacchus twas I
saw a Kite in the air so I wallow
Then raising my eyne from my posture supine
I give such a gulp that I swallow
O what but an obol I ve got in my mouth
and am forced to return empty handed
Pe *And the whole of Phoenice and Egypt was erst*
by a masterful Cuckoo commanded
When his loud cuckoo cry was resounding on high
at once the Phoenicians would leap
All hands to the plain rich waving with grain
their wheat and their barley to reap
Eu So that s why we cry to the circumcised Hi!
Cuckoo! To the plain! Cuckoo!
Pe And whenever in the cities of Hellas a chief
to honour and dignity grew
Menelaus or King Agamemnon perchance
your rule was so firm and decided
That a bird on his sceptre would perch to partake
of the gifts for his Lordship provided
Eu Now of that I declare I was never aware
and I oft have been filled with amaze
When Priam so noble and stately appeared
with a bird in the Tragedy plays
But the bird was no doubt for the gifts looking out
to Lysicrates brought on the sly

O es—but tell us how can he ard I
Consort with you we w ngless and you w n ed?
H Why ry ell
P Nay but in Aesop s fables
There som th m d you told about the fox
How l t f red consorting with an ea l
H O e fea fo the sa littl root
Which l en ve ha e eat n ve will both be w nged
P That be so we ll enter Xanthias there
And M nod rus, bri g long the tr ps
Ch O sta and O stay!
Ho Why what ail you to-day?
Ch Tak th g d m n t and r g le them we sp
B t O for th n ght ngale peerless in song
wh cha ts n the hou of the Muses her lay
O sweetest and best fetch her out of the nest
and let e her while w th the Chorus to play
P O do, by Ze s, g a t them this one request
F tch out the l ttl warble from the reeds.
Eu Yes, fet h her out by all the Gods, that so
W too may gaz pon the n ghtingale
H Well if you sh it so we'll ha e t Procne.
Com h th r dea nd l t the st angers see you
Enter PROC E, with night gale s h ad and wings other se clad as a girl in a rich costume
P Zeus, hat a da l ng lo ely l ttle bi d!
How fair nd tender!
Eu O the little lov
Would I l k to be her mate th s nst nt!
P And O the gold she is wearin like a girl.
Eu Upon my word I e half a mind to kiss he !
P Kiss her you fool! Her beak a pai of p ts
Eu B t I ould t eat h l ke ne nd st p
The egg shell from her pod a d kiss her so
H Come, go w n
P Lead on, and luck go with us.
Exeunt HOOPOE, EU LPIDES *a d* EISTH T R S

Choru

O da ling! O tawn th oat!
Love, whom I lo e the best,
Dearer than ll the est
Pla mat nd part e n
All m soft la s,
Thou art com ! Thou rt come!
Thou hast dawned on m gaze,
I ha hea d th sweet ote,
N ght al N ghting l !
Thou from th fl t Soft -sounding canst bri g
M c to suit W th ou song of th Spring
B gin then I pray
Ou o napaestic ddress to essay

Ye men h a d mly existing below
wh peri h nd fade as th leaf
P l orbeg n had wi ke, pitiles folk
lif feeble and w less nd brief.
Frail castu es o cla who e go in ad y
like a dream full l so row nd sighin
Come, h en th ear to th B ds of the ai
the ag less, th deathless, who fl t

In the joy and the freshness of Ether are wont
to muse upo n w sd m undying
We w ill tell ou of th gs transcende tal of Springs
and f I s the mighty uphea al
The n tur of B rds and the birth of the Gods
and of Chaos and Darkness prime al
Wh n this ve shall know ll told P odicus go
nd be hang ed w ith ut h pe of repri e al
Th re as Chaos at first and Darkness, and N ght
and Tart rus vasty and d smal
But the Earth was not the e n r the Sky nor the Air
t ll at length in the bosom abysmal
Of D rkness an eg fr m the whirlwind conceived
wa laid by the sable plumed Night
And out of th at egg s the Seasons revol ed
spr ang Love the tra c n th e bri ht
Lo e brilliant and bold w ith h pin ons of gold
l ke a whirlwind refulgent and sparkli g!
Lo e hatched us, comm ngli g in Ta tarus wide
w th Chaos th mu ky the da king
And brou ht us abo e as the firstlings of love
and first to the light we ascended
There wa never a r ce of Immortals t all
till Lo e had the uni verse blended
Then all th gs c mmingling together in lo e,
there a ose the fair Earth and the Sky
And the lim tless Sea and the race of the Gods,
the Blessed who ne er shall d e
So than the Blessed are older by far
nd abunda ce f proof is xisting
That we re th children of Love fo we fly
u fortunate lov rs assistin
And man a man who has found to his ost
that h powers of persuasio ha e failed
And hi lo es hav abjured h m for e again
by the pow r of th B rds has p evailed
For the g ft of quail, or a Porphyry r il,
or a Persian or goose w ll rem n them
And the chi fest of blessings ve mo tals enjoy
by the help of the Birds ve obtain them
'Tis from us that the sig s f th Seasons n tu n,
Spri g Wint r and A tumn re known
When to Lib a th cr ne fl es cla g ng gain
t is time f th seed to be sown
And the k pper may hang up hi rudd while
nd sleep after ll h s ex rtions,
And O estes may wea him a wrap to be warm
wh n he o st on his thie i h excu ions
Th e m th the kite w th it ho e i g fli ht
f th ad ent of Spr g to tell
A d th Spring sheep- hearing begi s and next
you woollen ture ou sell,
A d b ou a l ghter and dainti r garb
when you note th r t n of the swall w
Th s our Ammon Dodona and Delphi ar we
we a e also o Phoebus Apoll
Fo whate ou do, f trad you p rsue
or good in the ma k t are b ying
Or the wedd ng ttend of ne ghbour and friend
first you look to the Bird and their flying

Demeter may fill them with grain if she will
when hungry and pinched they entreat her
Eu O no for by Zeus she will make some excuse
that is always the way with Demeter
Pe And truly the ravens shall pluck out the eyes
of the oxen that work in the plough
Of the flocks and the herds as a proof that the Birds
are the Masters and Potentates now
Apollo the leech if his aid they beseech
may cure them but then they must pay!
Eu Nay but hold nay but hold nor begin till I ve sold
my two little oxen I pray
Pe But when once to esteem you as God and as Life
and as Cronos and Earth they ve begun
And as noble Poseidon what joys shall be theirs!
Ch Will you kindly inform me of one?
Pe The delicate tendrils and bloom of the vine
no more shall the locusts molest
One gallant brigade of the kestrels and owls
shall rid them at once of the pest
No more shall the mite and the gall making blight
the fruit of the fig tree devour
Of thrushes one troop on their armies shall swoop
and clear them all off in an hour
Ch But how shall we furnish the people with wealth?
It is wealth that they mostly desire
Pe Choice blessings and rare ye shall give them whene er
they come to your shrine to inquire
To the seer ye shall tell when tis lucky and well
for a merchant to sail o er the seas
So that never a skipper again shall be lost
Ch What never ? Explain if you please
Pe Are they seeking to know when a voyage to go?
The Birds shall give answers to guide them
Now stick to the land there s a tempest at hand!
Now sail! and good luck shall betide them
Eu A galley for me I am off to the sea!
No longer with you will I stay
Pe The treasures of silver long since in the earth
by their forefathers hidden away
To men ye shall show for the secret ye know
How often a man will declare
There is no one who knows where my treasures repose
if it be not a bird of the air
Eu My galley may go I will buy me a hoe
and dig for the crock and the casket
Ch But Health I opine is a blessing divine
can we give it to men if they ask it?
Pe If they ve plenty of wealth they ll have plenty of health
ye may rest quite assured that they will
Did you ever hear tell of a man that was well
when faring remarkably ill?
Ch Long life tis Olympus alone can bestow
so can men live as long as before?
Must they die in their youth?
Pe Die? No! why in truth
their lives by three hundred or more
New years ye will lengthen
Ch Why whence will they come?
Pe From your own inexhaustible store
What! dost thou not know that the noisy tongued crow
lives five generations of men?
Eu O fie! it is plain they are fitter to reign
than the Gods let us have them again
Pe Ay fitter by far!
No need for their sakes to erect and adorn
Great temples of marble with portals of gold
Enough for the birds on the brake and the thorn
And the evergreen oak their receptions to hold
Or if any are noble and courtly and fine
The tree of the olive will serve for their shrine
No need when a blessing we seek to repair
To Delphi or Ammon and sacrifice there
We will under an olive or arbutus stand
With a present of barley and wheat
And piously lifting our heart and our hand
The birds for a boon we'll entreat
And the boon shall be ours and our suit we shall gain
At the cost of a few little handfuls of grain
Ch I thought thee at first of my foemen the worst
and lo I have found thee the wisest
And best of my friends and our nation intends
to do whatsoe er thou advisest
A spirit so lofty and rare
Thy words have within me excited
That I lift up my soul and I swear
That if Thou wilt with Me be united
In bonds that are holy and true
And honest and just and sincere
If our hearts are attuned to one song
We will march on the Gods without fear
The sceptre—*my* sceptre *my* due—
They shall not be handling it long!
So all that by muscle and strength can be done
ye Birds will assuredly do
But whatever by prudence and skill must be won
we leave altogether to you
Ho Aye and by Zeus, the time is over now
For drowsy nods and Nicias hesitations
We must be up and doing! And do you
Ore er we start visit this nest of mine
My bits of things my little sticks and straws
And tell me what your names are
Pe That s soon done
My name is Peisthetaerus
Ho And your friend s?
Pe Euelpides of Crio
Ho Well ye are both
Heartily welcome
Pe Thank you
Ho Come ye in
Pe Aye come we in you please precede us
Ho Come
Pe But—dear! what was it? step you back a moment

For a Crotona ... a Cockerel
... from nothing he of late
has become a ... cock here
... a pillar of the State!

Enter PEISTHETAERUS *and* EUELPIDES, *equipped as birds.*

What have we here, B... Zeus, I never saw
... more laughable.

Eu. What are you laughing at?

Pi. At our fine feathers.
... you ... like ... you.
... sketched by some ... cheap ...

Eu. And you, a ... bird, with a bowl-cropped ...

Pi. These shafts of ridicule are winged by nought
But our own plumes, as Aeschylus would say.

Ch. What's the next step?

Pi. First we must give the city
Some grand heroic name, and then we'll sacrifice
To the high Gods.

Eu. That's my opinion also.

Ch. Then let's consider what the name shall be.

Pi. What think you of that grand Laconian name
Sparta?

Eu. What! Sparta for my city? No.
I wouldn't use esparto for my pallet
Not if I'd cords by Heracles, not I.

Pi. How shall we name it then?

Ch. I want some fine
Magniloquent name drawn from these upper spaces
And clouds.

Pi. What think you of Cloudcuckoobury?

Ch. Good! Good!
You have found a good big name and no mistake.

Eu. Is this the great Cloudcuckoobury town
Where all the wealth of Aeschines lies hid,
And all Theagenes'?

Pi. Best of all,
This is the plain of Phlegra, where the Gods
Outshot the giants at the game of Brag.

Eu. A glistening sort of city! Who shall be
Its guardian God? For whom shall we weave the
Peplus?

Pi. Why not retain Athene City-keeper?

Eu. And how can that be a well-ordered State
Where she, a woman born, a Goddess, stand
Full armed, and Cleisthenes assumes the spindle?

Pi. And who shall hold the citadel? Is Storkade ?

Ch. A bird of ours, one of the Persian breed
Everywhere noted as the War-god's own
Armipotent cockerel.

Eu. O Prince Cockerel? Yes,
He's just the God to perch upon the rocks.

Pi. Now comrade get you up to the air
And lend a hand to those that build the wall.
Bring up the rubble, strip, and mix the mortar
Run up the ladder with the hod, fall off
Station the sentries, conceal the fire
Round with the alarum bell, go fast asleep
And send two heralds, one to heaven above
And one to earth below, and let them come

From thence, for me

Eu. And you, remain ... here

Pi. ... for me!
Go where I send you, comrade

Exit EUELPIDES, *who does not appear again.*

Without your help these nothing will be done.
But I, to sacrifice to these new Gods,
Must call the priest to manage the show
Boy! Boy! take up the basket and the laver

Ch. I'm with you, you'll find me quite willing
I'm ... your kind ...
A ... to ... the ... di...
Make high processions ... and fine,
... let the Pythian cry
The Pythian cry to the God be sent
Let Chaeris play the accompaniment

Pi. O stop that puffing! Heracles, what's this?
Faith, I've seen many a sight but never yet
A mouth-band wearing raven. Now then, priest
To the new Gods commence the sacrifice

Enter PRIEST

Priest. I'll do your bidding. Where's the basket bearer?

Let us pray
To the Hestian bird of the household shrine
And the kite that watches her feasts divine
And to all the Olympian birds and birdesses,

Pi. O Sunium-hawk, O King of the Sea-mew hall!

Pr. And to the holy Swan, the Pythian and Delian one
And to thee too, Quail-guid Leto,
And to Artemis the Thistle-finch.

Pi. Aye This...-finch no more Colaenis now!

Pr. And to Sabazius the Phrygian linnet and then
To Rhea the Great Mother of Gods and men

Pi. Aye Ostrich-queen, Cleocritus's Mother!

Pr. That they may grant health and salvation
To the whole Cloudcuckooburian nation
For themselves and the Chians.

Pi. I like the Chians everywhere tacked on.

Pr. And to the hero-birds and sons of heroes,
And to the Porphyrion rail
And to the pelican white and pelican grey
And to the ... and to the capercailzie
And to the peacock, and to the sedgewarbler
And to the teal, and to the skua
And to the heron and to the gannet
And to the blackcap, and to the titmouse—

Pi. Stop, stop your calling, hang you. O look here
To what a victim ... are you calling
Ospreys and vultures? Don't you see that one
One single kite could carry off the whole?
Get away hence, you and your garlands too!
Myself alone will sacrifice this victim

Exit PRIEST

Ch. Once more as the laver they're bringing
Once more I ... hymns must be singing,
Hymns holy and pious, the God to invite—
Only ... only one,—to our festival rite

And whene er you of omen or augury speak
as a bird you are always repeating
A Rumour s a bird and a sneeze is a bird
and so is a word or a meeting
A servant s a bird and an ass is a bird
It must therefore assuredly follow
That the Birds are to you (I protest it is true)
your prophetic divining Apollo

Then take us for Gods as is proper and fit
And Muses Prophetic ye ll have at your call
Spring winter and summer and autumn and all
And we won t run away from your worship and sit
Up above in the cloud very stately and grand
Like Zeus in his tempers but always at hand
Health and wealth we ll bestow as the formula runs
On yourselves and your sons and the sons of your sons
And happiness plenty and peace shall belong
To you all and the revel the dance and the song
And laughter and youth and the milk of the birds
We ll supply and we ll never forsake you
Ye ll be quite overburdened with pleasures and joys
So happy and blest we will make you

O woodland Muse
tio tio tio tiotinx
Of varied plume with whose dear aid
On the mountain top and the sylvan glade
tio tio tio tiotinx
I sitting up aloft on a leafy ash full oft
tio tio tio tiotinx
Pour forth a warbling note from my little tawny throat
Pour festive choral dances to the mountain mother s praise
And to Pan the holy music of his own immortal lays
totótotótotótotótotinx
Whence Phrynichus of old
Sipping the fruit of our ambrosial lay
Bore like a bee the honied store away
His own sweet songs to mould
'Tio tio tio tio tiotinx

Is there any one amongst you
O spectators who would lead
With the birds a life of pleasure
let him come to us with speed
All that here is reckoned shameful
all that here the laws condemn
With the birds is right and proper
you may do it all with them
Is it here by law forbidden
for a son to beat his sire?
That a chick should strike his father
strutting up with youthful ire
Crowing Raise your spur and fight me
that is what the birds admire
Come you runaway deserter
spotted o er with marks of shame
Spotted Francolin we ll call you
that with us shall be your name

You who style yourself a tribesman
Phrygian pure as Spintharus,
Come and be a Phrygian linnet
of Philemon s breed with us
Come along you slave and Carian
Execestides to wit
Breed with us your Cuckoo rearers
they ll be guildsmen apt and fit
Son of Peisias who to outlaws
would the city gates betray
Come to us and be a partridge
(*cockerel like the cock* they say)
We esteem it no dishonour
knavish partridge tricks to play
Even thus the Swans
tio tio tio tiotinx
Their clamorous cry were erst up raising
With clatter of wings Apollo praising
tio tio tio tiotinx
As they sat in serried ranks on the river Hebrus banks.
tio tio tio tiotinx
Right upward went the cry
through the cloud and through the sky
Quailed the wild beast in his covert,
and the bird within her nest
And the still and windless Ether
lulled the ocean waves to rest
Totótotótotótototinx "
Loudly Olympus rang!
Amazement seized the kings and every Grace
And every Muse within that heavenly place
Took up the strain and sang
Tio tio tio tio tiotinx

Truly to be clad in feather
is the very best of things.
Only fancy dear spectators
had you each a brace of wings
Never need you tired and hungry
at a Tragic Chorus stay
You would lightly when it bored you
spread your wings and fly away
Back returning after luncheon
to enjoy our Comic Play
Never need a Patrocleides
sitting here his garment stain
When the dire occasion seized him
he would off with might and main
Flying home then flying hither
lightened and relieved again
If a gallant should the husband
on the Council bench behold
Of a gay and charming lady
one whom he had loved of old
Off at once he d fly to greet her
have a little converse sweet
Then be back or e er ye missed him
calm and smiling in his seat
Is not then a suit of feathers
quite the very best of things?
Why Diitrephes was chosen
though he had but wicker wings,

O M Is all that to it?
P Take th book and see.
Get o be off, confound you! (*striking him*)
O M O! O! O!
P There, run awa and soothsa some-where else.
Exit ORACLE MONGER. *Enter* METO *with the* *geometric* *al instruments*
I come I come amoon you—
P Some new misery this!
Come t do hat? What s our scheme s form and outline
Wh s your design? What buskin s on your foot
M I come to land survey this Air of yours.
And me tout by acres.
P Hea en and Earth!
Whoever are you?
M (*measured*) Who ever am I? I m Meton,
Known throu hout Hella and Colonus.
P Aye
And hat are these?
M They re rod for Air surve in
I'll you explain. The Air s in outlin lik
One vast extinguisher so then, observe
Applying her my flexible rod, and fixin
My compass here—you understand?
P I don t
M With this stra ht rod I measure ou that so
The circle ma be squared nd n the centre
A market place and street be leadin to t
Straight to the ery centre j st s from
A star though circular strai ht ra s flash out
In all directions.
P Wh the man a Thales Meton!
M Yes, at
P You know I lov ou, M ton.
Take m advice, and slip wa unnoticed.
M Wh hat th matter?
P As in Lacedaemon
There strangers huntin and great d turbanc
And blows in plent
M What Revo tion
P No, no, not tha
M What then
P They al resol ed
With on consent t wa op every qua k.
M I'd bett be off
P Faith, I m ot quit certain
If ou re in time see, see the blows comin
(*striking him*)
M O murder h I
P I told you how twould be.
Come measure ff your steps some other wa
Exit METO *Enter a* COMMI O *to* *ER* *...*
Commissioner Ho consuls, ho
P Sardanapalus, surel !
Co Lo, I t your Cloudcu koobury come,
P ke Commissioner
P Commissioner?
Who sent you hither
Co
O Teleas Lo, a paltry scroll

P Come now will ou take our pay
And get you gone in peace?
Co By Hea en I will.
I ought to be t home on public business,
Some little jobs I ve had w th Pharnaces.
P Then take your pay and go your pa s just —this. (*Striking him*)
Co What s that?
P A motion about Pharnaces.
Co Witness! h s strikin a Commissioner
P Shoo! Shoo! be gone you nd you erdict urns.
Enter STATUTE SELLER
The sham at is! They send Commissioners
Bef re w e finished our ina ural rites.
Statute Seller (*reading*) B t f th Cloud-cuckoo-burian wrong the Athenian—"
P Here s som more writin What new misery s this?
S S I am a Statu e seller and I m come
Brin in new laws to sell you.
P Such as what?
S S "Item, the Cloudcuckooburians are to use the selfsame wei hts and measures, and the selfsame coinage as the O oph ians.
P And yo th selfsam as the Oh! Oh! tyrants. (*striking him*)
S S Hi! what are you at?
P Tak off those laws, you rascal.
Laws you won t like I ll gi e ou in a min te
Exit ST TUTE ELLER *bu he and the* COMMIS *s o* *in each make two brief reappearances and vanish*
Co (*re appearing*) I summon Peisthetaerus for next Mun chion on char e of outrage.
P O that s it is it? What, are you there still?
S S (*re appearing*) "Item, if any man dri e away the magistrates, and do not recei e them ccording t th pillar—"
P O mercy upon us, and are you there still?
Co (*re appearing*) I'll ruin you! I laim ten tho sand drachmas!
P I'll o erturn you erdict-urn, I will.
S S (*re appearing*) Think of that e enin when you fouled th pillar
P L h! seize him, somebod ! Ha, ou re off there re ou
Let get wa from this, and within,
And there w ll sacrifice th oat in peace.
Exeunt OMNES, *an the goat* *supposed to be sacrificed within*

Chorus

Unto m the All-controlli
All-survey n
Now will men, at every altar
Pra ers be pray
Me who wa h the land, protectin
Fruit and flower
Sla th m riad-swarmi insects
Who th ten er buds d our
In the earth and on the branches
with never-satiat malice,

Your feast for two I am sure won t do
For what you are going to offer there
Is nothing at all but horns and hair

Pe Let us pray
Offering our victim to the feathery gods

Enter a POET *to celebrate the founding of the new colony*

Poet (*singing*) Cloudcuckoobury
With praise and glory crown
Singing O Muse
Of the new and happy town!

Pe Whatever s this? Why who in the world are you?

Po O I m a warbler carolling sweet lays
An eager meagre servant of the Muses
As Homer says

Pe What! you a slave and wear your hair so long?

Po No but all we who teach sweet choral lays
Are eager meagre servants of the Muses
As Homer says

Pe That s why your cloak so meagre seems no doubt
But poet what ill wind has blown you hither?

Po Oh I ve been making making lovely songs
Simonideans virgin songs and sweet
Dithyrambic songs on your Cloudcuckooburies

Pe When did you first begin these lovely songs?

Po Long long ago O yes! Long long ago!

Pe Why is not this the City s Tenth day feast?
I ve just this instant given the child its name

Po But fleet as the merry many twinkling horses feet
The airy fairy Rumour of the Muses
Aetna s Founder father mine
Whose name is the same as the holy altar flame
Give to me what thy bounty chooses
To give me willingly of thine

Pe *He ll cause us trouble now unless we give him*
Something and so get off Hallo you priest
Why you ve a jerkin and a tunic too
Strip give the jerkin to this clever poet
Take it upon my word you *do* seem cold

Po This little kindly gift the Muse
Accepts with willing condescension
But let me to an apt remark
Of Pindar call my lord s attention

Pe The fellow does not seem inclined to leave us

Po Out among the Scythians yonder
See poor Straton wander wander
Poor poor Straton not possessed
of a whirly woven vest
All inglorious comes *I trow leather jerkin if below*
No soft tunic it can show
Conceive my drift I pray

Pe Aye I conceive you want the tunic too
Off with it you Needs must assist a Poet
There take it and depart

Po Yes I ll depart
And make to the city pretty songs like this
O Thou of the golden throne
Sing Her the quivering shivering
I came to the plains many sown
I came to the snows the blowy
Alalae! *Exit* POET

Pe Well well but now you surely have escaped
From all those shiverings with that nice warm vest
This is by Zeus a plague I never dreamed of
That he should find our city out so soon
Boy take the laver and walk round once more
Now hush! *Enter* ORACLE MONGER

Oracle Monger Forbear! touch not the goat awhile

Pe Eh? Who are you?

O M A soothsayer

Pe You be hanged!

O M O think not lightly friend of things divine
Know I ve an oracle of Bakis bearing
On your Cloudcuckooburies

Pe Eh? then why
Did you not soothsay that before I founded
My city here?

O M The Power within forbade me

Pe Well well there s nought like hearing what it says

O M Nay but if once grey crows
and wolves shall be banding together
Out in the midway space
twixt Corinth and Sicyon dwelling—

Pe But what in the world have I to do with Corinth?

O M Bakis is riddling Bakis means the Air
First to Pandora offer
a white fleeced ram for a victim
Next who first shall arrive
my verses prophetic expounding
Give him a brand new cloak
and a pair of excellent sandals.

Pe Are sandals in it?

O M Take the book and see
Give him moreover a cup
and fill his hands with the inwards

Pe Are inwards in it?

O M Take the book and see
Youth divinely inspired
if thou dost as I bid thou shalt surely
Soar in the clouds as an Eagle
refuse and thou ne er shalt become an
Eagle or even a dove
or a woodpecker tapping the oak tree

Pe Is all that in it?

O M Take the book and see

Pe O how unlike your oracle to mine
Which from Apollo s words I copied out
But if a cheat an impostor
presume to appear uninvited
Troubling the sacred rites
and lusting to taste of the inwards
Hit him betwixt the ribs
with all your force and your fury

O M You re jesting surely

Pe Take the book and see
See that ye spare not the rogue
though he soar in the clouds as an Eagle
Yea be he Lampon himself
or even the great Diopeithes

O M Is all that t?
Pe Take tl e book and see
Get out! be off confound ' (strik h m)
O M O! O! O! O!
Pe There, run a av and soothsay somewher else
Exit ORACLE S O GER *en er* MET N *wi h the i struments of land surveyor*
Meton I come am st you—
Pe Some n w misery this!
Come to d hat? What s your scheme s form nd outline
What s your design? What b kin s on your foot?
M I come t land survey this Air of yours,
Ad m e tout b ac es.
P Hea en and Earth!
Whoe er are you?
M (*scandalized*) Whoe er am I! I m *Meton*
Known throughout H lla nd Col nus.
Pe Aye
And hat a e *these*?
M They re rod for A r su eying
I'll just explain. Th Air s in o th e like
On ast extingu her so then observe
Ap ing here my flex ble rod d fixing
M compass there—you unde stand?
P I d n t
Me W th the stra ht od I measu e out that so
The circle may be squared and i th cent e
A market place nd st eets be leadi t it
Straight to the very ce tre j st s f m
A star though ci cular tr i ht ra fla h out
In all di ections.
Pe Why the man s a Thales! M ton!
M Yes, what
P Yo kno I l you M t n
T l mvad ce and sl p away u noti ed
M Wh what s th matter?
P As Laceda m n
There s strang hu t and g eat d turbance
And bo s in plenty
M What a Re lut o
P N n n t that
M What th ?
Pe Th e all esol ed
W th one consent t wall pe ry quack
Me To best b
P Fa th I m not q ite c rtain
If ou re in t m see, see the bl w a e om !
(*str k g him*)
M O mu der! h lp!
P I told y h tw ld be
Come, measu e off your steps som oth ay
Exit M T *Enter a* O *NAS* TO E I *inspect th new col ny*
Comm ner H ! onsuls, ho!
P Sardanapalus, u ly!
Co Lo, I to o r Cl ud koob es ome
P lot Comm ssioner
Pe Commi sio e ?
Who sent you hither?
Co
Of Teleas. Lo, a paltry croll

Pe Come now will you take your pay
And get you gone in peace?
Co By Heaven I will
I ought to be at h me on public business
Some little j bs I e had with Pharnaces.
Pe Then take your pay and go your pay s just —this. (*Striking him*)
Co What s that?
Pe A motion about Pharnaces
Co Witness! he s str k g a Commis ioner
Pe Shoo! Shoo! beg ne you d your erd ct u ns
Enter STATUTE SELLER
The shame it is! They send Commi oners
Befo e we ve fin shed our inaugural rites
Statute Seller (*readi g*) But if the Cloudcuckooburian wr g the Athenian—
Pe Here s some more writ ng What new misery s this?
S S I am a Statute seller nd I m come
Bringing new laws to sell you
Pe Such as what?
S S Item the Cloudcuckooburians are to use th selfsame weights d mea ures, a d the selfsame coinage as the Olophyxians
Pe And you the selfsame as the Oh! Oh! ty ians. (*st k g him*)
S S Hi! what are you at?
P Take off those laws, you rascal
Laws you w n t like I ll gi e you in a m nute
Exit ST TUTE S LLE *but h nd th* C M IS SIO ER *each make two brief* *pp ar n s and an h*
Co (*appearing*) I summon Peisthetae s for next Mu ych on on a char e of utra e
P O that s it is it? What a e you ther still?
S S (*ap earing*) Item if any man dr away the ma str tes, a d do not ecei e them rd ng to the p llar—
P O mercy upon us, and are *you* there still?
Co (*re pp ri g*) I ll ru n yo ! I cla m ten thousand dra hmas!
P I ll overtur o r rd ct ur I will
S S (*reappeari g*) Th nk of th t e ening when you fouled the pillar
P U h! se ze h m som body! Ha you re ff the e ar y u?
Let s get ay from th s, nd g w th n
And th e we ll sacrifice the goat in peace
Exeunt O *a d th goat s supposed to be sacrificed with*

Choru
Unto m the All-c ll g
All surve n
Now will mer t e ery ltar
Pray rs be pra i g
M who wat h the land p otect
Fru t d flower
Slay th m ud a mi i sect
Wh o the tende buds de ur
In th earth and o the b an hes
with a ne er satiate malice

Your feast for two I am sure won t do
For what you are going to offer there
Is nothing at all but horns and hair
Pe Let us pray
Offering our victim to the feathery gods
Enter a POET *to celebrate the founding of the new colony*
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As Homer says
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But poet what ill wind has blown you hither?
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Simonideans virgin songs and sweet
Dithyrambic songs on your Cloudcuckooburies
Pe When did you first begin these lovely songs?
Po Long long ago O yes! Long long ago!
Pe Why is not this the City s Tenth day feast?
I ve just this instant given the child its name
Po But fleet as the merry many twinkling horses feet
The airy fairy Rumour of the Muses
Aetna s Founder father mine
Whose name is the same as the holy altar flame
Give to me what thy bounty chooses
To give me willingly of thine
Pe He ll cause us trouble now unless we give him
Something and so get off Hallo you priest
Why you ve a jerkin and a tunic too
Strip give the jerkin to this clever poet
Take it upon my word you *do* seem cold
Po This little kindly gift the Muse
Accepts with willing condescension
But let me to an apt remark
Of Pindar call my lord s attention
Pe The fellow does not seem inclined to leave us
Po Out among the Scythians yonder
See poor Straton wander wander
Poor poor Straton not possessed
of a whirly woven vest
All inglorious comes I trow leather jerkin if below
No soft tunic it can show
Conceive my drift I pray
Pe Aye I conceive you want the tunic too
Off with it you *Needs must assist a Poet*
There take it and d part
Po Yes I ll depart
And make to the city pretty songs like this
O Thou of the golden throne
Sing Her the quivering shivering
I came to the plains many sown
I came to the snows the blowy
Alalae! *Exit* POET
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From all those shiverings with that nice warm vest
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That he should find our city out so soon
Boy take the laver and walk round once more
Now hush! *Enter* ORACLE MONGER
Oracle Monger Forbear! touch not the goat awhile
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O M A soothsayer
Pe You be hanged!
O M O think not lightly friend of things divine
Know I ve *an oracle of Bakis bearing*
On your Cloudcuckooburies
Pe Eh? then why
Did you not soothsay that before I founded
My city here?
O M The Power within forbade me
Pe Well well there s nought like hearing what it says
O M Nay but if once grey crows
and wolves shall be banding together
Out in the midway space
twixt Corinth and Sicyon dwelling—
Pe But what in the world have I to do with Corinth?
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First to Pandora offer
a white fleeced ram for a victim
Next who first shall arrive
my verses prophetic expoundin
Give him a brand new cloak
and a pair of excellent sandals.
Pe Are sandals in it?
O M Take the book and see
Give him moreover a cup
and fill his hands with the inwards
Pe Are inwards in it?
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Youth divinely inspired
if thou dost as I bid thou shalt surely
Soar in the clouds as an Eagle
refuse and thou ne er shalt become an
Eagle or even a dove
or a woodpecker tapping the oak tree
Pe Is all that in it?
O M Take the book and see
Pe O how unlike your oracle to mine
Which from Apollo s words I copied out
But if a cheat an impostor
presume to appear uninvited
Troubling the sacred rites
and lusting to taste of the inwards
Hit him betwixt the ribs
with all your force and your fury
O M You re jesting surely
Pe Take the book and see
See that ye spare not the rogue
though he soar in the clouds as an Eagle
Yea be he Lampon himself
or even the great Diopeithes

W S great foundation stones they had swall wed down
And these the corn-crakes fashioned w th their beaks.
Ten thousand storks were carrying up the bricks
ad h w s helped nd the other water b rds,
T bring t e water p into th air
P Who bare aloft the mortar f r them?
Mes Herons
I bods.
P But how did th g t the mortar n?
Mes O that was most en ousl contri ed
The geese struck down their feet and slid them under
Lik shovels, nd so hea ed t on the hods.
P Then is there an thing that *feet* can t do?
Mes And then the ducks, with girdles round their waists,
Carried the bricks and p the swallows flew
Lik serving lads, carryin behind them each
His trowel, and th mortar in their mouths.
P Then wh should men hire hirelings any more!
Well, well, go on who wa it finished off
The great wall s woodwork?
Mes Cann Pelicans,
Excellent workmen, hew w th h ge beak
Ga e timber and th uproa as they hewed
Was like an arsenal when ships a e b ld n
Now every gateway has its gat fa t barred
And watched the whole wa round nd birds are pacing
Their beats, and carrying bells, and e rywhere
Th guards are stationed, and th beacons blaze
On every towe B t I mu t hurry off
And wash m self. You, manage what emains.
Exit
Ch O man, hat ails ou? Do ou feel surprised
T hear he buildi g ha been built so soon?
P B all the Gods I do and well I ma
In very truth t seems to me like—lies.
But see guard, a messenger from thence
Is running towards us with war-dance look!
Enter GUARD.
Guard Hallo Hallo Hallo Hall ! Hallo!
P Wh hat s up now?
Gu A terrible thin ha happened
One of the Gods, of Zeus s Gods, has just
G ne out y keaw sentin is th slip,
Shot thro gh the gates nd flown into the air
P A dreadful deed A wi ked scandalous deed!
Which of the Gods
G W know not. Wings he had.
So much w know
P Y should ha sent t once
The civic guard in hot pursuit.
Gu W sent
The moun ed ar hers, thirty thousand falcons,
A th their talons curved, in fighting trim,
Ha k, buzzard, vulture, ea le eagle-owl
Yea, Ether brates w th the whizz nd whirr
Of beating pinions, as they seek the God.
A and he s near methinks he s ery near
He s somewhere her
Pe A sl n a slin I say!
A rows and bo s! Fall in my merry men all!
Shoot smite be resolute A sl n ! a sling!
Ch War is begun in xpress e war
W r is be un tw xt the Gods and me!
Look out look out through the cloud wrapt air
Wh ch erst the Darkness of Erebus bare,
Lest a God slip by and we fail to see
Glance ea er-eyed on e ery side
For close at hand the w nged sound I hear
Of some Immortal hurtlin through the Sky
Enter IRIS.
Pe Ho! whither away there? whither away?
Stop! stop!
Stop where you a e! keep quiet! stay! remain!
Who, what whence are ou? where do you come from Quick!
Iris Whence do I come? From the Olympian Gods.
Pe Your name! What is t? Sloop or Head-dress?
I Iris
The fleet.
Pe The Paralus, or the Salaminian?
I Wh what s ll this?
P Fl up some buzzard there,
Fl up, nd seize her
I Me! Seize *me* do ou say?
What th plague this?
Pe You ll find to our cost directly
Ir Well now th passes!
Pe Answer! By what gates
Got ou w thin the city wall, M ss Minx?
I I faith, I know not fellow by what gates.
Pe You hear th jad how she pre aricates!
Saw you th daw-commanders? What no answer?
Where s your stork pass?
I M patience what do ou mean?
Pe You never got one?
I Ha e o lost your wits?
Pe Did no bird-captain stick a label on ou?
I On *me*? None stuck a label, wr t h, on *me*
Pe So then ou thou ht in this sly tealthy way
To fl through Chaos nd realm not ours?
I And b what route, then, ou ht the Gods to fly?
Pe I' faith, I know not. Onl not by this.
This is t espass! If ou got your rights,
Of all the Irises that ever wer
You d be most justl seized and put t death.
I B t I am deathless
Pe All the same for that
You should ha died A prett thing forsooth,
If, whilst all else obey us, you the Gods
Run riot, and forget that ou in turn
Must learn to yield obed ence to our betters.
B t tell m where do ou na vate ou wings?
I I From the F ther t mankind I m fl ing,
To bid them their bullock-sla ghterin hearths
Sa sheep to the Ol mpian Gods, and steam
The streets w th sa our

Nipping off the blossom as it widens from the chalice
And I slay the noisome creatures
Which consume
And pollute the garden s freshly scented bloom
And every little biter and every creeping thing
Perish in destruction at the onset of my wing
Listen to the City s notice
specially proclaimed to day
Sirs Diagoras[1] the Melian
whosoever of you slay
Shall receive reward one talent
and another we ll bestow
If you slay some ancient tyrant
dead and buried long ago
We the Birds will give a notice
we proclaim with right good will
Sirs Philocrates Sparrowian
whosoever of you kill
Shall receive reward one talent
if alive you bring him four
Him who strings and sells the finches
seven an obol at his store
Blows the thrushes out and rudely
to the public gaze exposes
Shamefully entreats the blackbirds
thrusting feathers up their noses
Pigeons too the rascal catches
keeps and mews them up with care
Makes them labour as decoy birds
tethered underneath a snare
Such the notice we would give you
And we wish you all to know
Who are keeping birds in cages
you had better let them go
Else the Birds will surely catch you
and yourselves in turn employ
Tied and tethered up securely
other rascals to decoy

O the happy clan of birds
Clad in feather
Needing not a woollen vest in
Wintry weather
Heeding not the warm far flashing
Summer ray
For within the leafy bosoms
Of the flowery meads I stay
When the Chirruper in ecstasy
is shrilling forth his tune
Maddened with th sunshine
and the rapture of the noon
And I winter in the caverns
Hollow space
With the happy Oreads playing and in Spring
I crop the virgin flowers of the myrtles white and tender
Dainties that are fashioned in the gardens of the Graces

[1]D oras, an atheis had d vulged and re iled the Mysteries

Now we wish to tell the Judges
in a friendly sort of way
All the blessings we shall give them
if we gain the prize to-day
Ne er were made to Alexander
lovelier promises or grander
First what every Judge amongst you
most of all desires to win
Little Lauriotic owlets
shall be always flocking in
Ye shall find them all about you
as the dainty brood increases
Building nests within your purses
hatching little silver pieces
Then as if in stately Temples
shall your happy lives be spent
For the birds will top your mansions
with the Eagle pediment
If you hold some petty office
if you wish to steal and pick
In your hands we ll place a falcon
very keen and small and quick
If a dinner is in question
crops we ll send you for digestion
But should you the prize deny us
you had better all prepare
Like the statues in the open
little copper disks to wear
Else whene er abroad ye re walking
clad in raiment white and new
Angry birds will wreak their vengeance
spattering over it and you

Enter PEISTHETAERUS

Pe Dear Birds our sacrifice is most auspicious
But strange it is no messenger has come
From the great wall we are building with the news
Hah! here runs one with true Alphean pantings

Enter MESSENGER *panting like an Olympian runner*

Messenger Where where —O where where where—
O where where where
Where where s our leader Peisthetaerus?
Pe Here
Mes Your building s built! The wall s complete!
Pe Well done
Mes And a most grand magnificent work it is
So broad that on its top the Braggadocian
Proxenides could pass Theagenes
Each driving in his chariot drawn by horses
As bulky as the Trojan
Pe Heracles!
Mes And then its height I measured that is just
Six hundred feet
Pe Poseidon what a height!
Who built it up to that enormous size?
Mes The birds, none other no Egyptian bearing
The bricks no mason carpenter was there
Their own hands wrought it marvellous to see.
From Libya came some thirty thousand cranes

With great foundation stones they had swallowed down
And there the corn-crakes fashioned with their beaks.
Ten thousand storks were carrying up the bricks
and ... helped, and the other water birds,
... the water up into the air
P Who bare aloft the mortar for them?
Me. Herons
... birds.
P But how did they get the mortar in?
Mes. O that was most ingeniously contrived
The geese struck down their feet, and slid them under
Like shovels, and so heaved it on the hods.
P Then is there anything that *feet* can't do?
Mes. And then the ducks, with girdles round their waists,
Carried the bricks, and up the swallows flew
Like serving lads, carrying behind them each
His trowel, and the mortar in their mouths.
P Then why should men hire hirelings any more?
Well, well, go on, who was it finished off
The great wall's woodwork?
Mes. Canny Pelicans,
Excellent workmen, hewing with huge beaks
Gate timber and the uproar as they hewed
Was like an arsenal when ships are building
Now every gateway has its gate, fast barred
And watched the whole way round and birds are pacing
Their beats, and carrying bells, and everywhere
The guards are stationed, and the beacons blaze
On every tower. But I must hurry off
And wash myself. You, manage what remains.
Exit
Ch. O man, what ails you? Do you feel surprised
To hear the building has been built so soon?
P By all the Gods I do and well I may
In very truth it seems to me like—lies.
But see! a guard, a messenger from thence
Is running towards us with a war-dance look!
Enter a GUARD
Guard Hallo! Hallo Hallo Hall ! Hallo!
P What's up now?
G A terrible thing has happened
One of the Gods, of Zeus's Gods, has just
Gone, ... jackdaw sentinels the slip.
Shot through the gates and flown into the air
P A dreadful deed! A wicked scandalous deed!
Which of the Gods?
G We know not Wings he had
So much we know
P You should have sent at once
The civic guard in hot pursuit
G. ... We sent
The mounted archers, thirty thousand falcons,
All with their talons curved, in fighting trim.
Hawk, buzzard, vulture ... ...
Yea, Ether vibrates with the whizz and hum
Of beating pinions, as they seek the God.

And ... and he's near methinks he's very near
He's somewhere here
P A sling a sling, I say!
Arrows and bows! Fall in my merrymen all!
Shoot smite be resolute. A sling! a sling!
Ch War is begun, inexpressible war
War is begun twixt the Gods and me!
Look out look out through the cloud wrapt air
Which erst the Darkness of Erebus bare,
Lest a God slip by and we fail to see
Glance eager-eyed on every side
For close at hand the winged sound I hear
Of some Immortal hurtling through the Sky
Enter IRIS.
P Ho! whither away there? whither away?
Stop! stop!
Stop where you are! keep quiet! stay! remain!
Who, what, whence are you? where do you come from? Quick!
Iris Whence do I come? From the Olympian Gods.
P Your name! What is it? Sloop or Head-dress?
I Iris
The fleet
P The Paralus, or the Salaminian?
I Why what's all this?
P Fly up, some buzzard there,
Fly up, and seize her
I Me! Seize *me* do you say?
What the plague's this?
P You'll find to your cost directly
I Well now this passes!
P Answer! By what gates
Got you within the city wall, Miss Minx?
I I' faith, I know not fellow by what gates.
P You hear the jade how she prevaricates!
Saw you the daw-commanders? What no answer?
Where's your stork pass?
I My patience what do you mean?
P You never got one?
Ir Have you lost your wits?
P Did no bird-captain stick a label on you?
I On *me*? None stuck a label wretch, *on me*
P So then you thought in this sly stealthy way
To fly through Chaos and a realm not yours?
I And by what route then, ought the Gods to fly?
P I' faith, I know not. Only not by this.
This is trespass! If you got your rights,
Of all the Irises that ever were
You'd be most justly seized and put to death.
I But I'm deathless.
P All the same for that
You should have died A pretty thing forsooth,
If, whilst all else obey us, you the Gods
Run riot and forget that you in turn
Must learn to yield obedience to your betters.
But tell me where do you navigate your wings?
I I? From the Father to mankind I'm flying
To bid them on their bullock slaughtering hearths
Slay sheep to the Olympian Gods, and steam
The streets with savour

Nipping off the blossom as it widens from the chal
ice
And I slay the noisome creatures
Which consume
And pollute the garden s freshly scented bloom
And every little biter and every creeping thing
Perish in destruction at the onset of my wing
Listen to the City s notice
specially proclaimed to day
Sirs Diagoras[1] the Melian
whosoever of you slay
Shall receive reward one talent
and another we ll bestow
If you slay some ancient tyrant
dead and buried long ago
We the Birds will give a notice
we proclaim with right good will
Sirs Philocrates Sparrovian
whosoever of you kill
Shall receive reward one talent
if alive you bring him four
Him who strings and sells the finches
seven an obol at his store
Blows the thrushes out and rudely
to the public gaze exposes
Shamefully entreats the blackbirds
thrusting feathers up their noses
Pigeons too the rascal catches
keeps and mews them up with care
Makes them labour as decoy birds
tethered underneath a snare
Such the notice we would give you
And we wish you all to know
Who are keeping birds in cages
you had better let them go
Else the Birds will surely catch you
and yourselves in turn employ
Tied and tethered up securely
other rascals to decoy

O the happy clan of birds
Clad in feather
Needing not a woollen vest in
Wintry weather
Heeding not the warm far flashing
Summer ray
For within the leafy bosoms
Of the flowery meads I stay
When the Chirruper in ecstasy
is shrilling forth his tune
Maddened with the sunshine
and the rapture of the noon
And I winter in the caverns
Hollow space
With the happy Oreads playing and in Spring
I crop the virgin flowers of the myrtles white and
tender
Dainties that are fashioned in the gardens of the
Graces

[1] Diagoras an atheist had divulged and re led the Mysteries.

Now we wish to tell the Judges
in a friendly sort of way
All the blessings we shall give them
if we gain the prize to-day
Ne er were made to Alexander
lovelier promises or grander
First what every Judge amongst you
most of all desires to win
Little Lauriotic owlets
shall be always flocking in
Ye shall find them all about you
as the dainty brood increases
Building nests within your purses
hatching little silver pieces.
Then as if in stately Temples
shall your happy lives be spent
For the birds will top your mansions
with the Eagle pediment
If you hold some petty office
if you wish to steal and pick
In your hands we ll place a falcon
very keen and small and quick
If a dinner is in question
crops we ll send you for digestion
But should you the prize deny us
you had better all prepare
Like the statues in the open
little copper disks to wear
Else whene er abroad ye re walking
clad in raiment white and new
Angry birds will wreak their vengeance
spattering over it and you

Enter PEISTHETAERUS

Pe Dear Birds our sacrifice is most auspicious.
But strange it is no messenger has come
From the great wall we are building with the
news
Hah! here runs one with true Alpheian pantings

Enter MESSENGER *panting like an Olympian runner*

Messenger Where where —O where where
where—
O where where where
Where where s our leader Peisthetaerus?
Pe Here
Mes *Your building s built! The wall s complete!*
Pe Well done
Mes And a most grand magnificent work it is
So broad that on its top the Braggadocian
Proxenides could pass Theagenes
Each driving in his chariot drawn by horses
As bulky as the Trojan
Pe Heracles!
Mes And then its height I measured that is just
Six hundred feet
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The bricks no mason carpenter was there
Their own hands wrought it marvellous to see
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With great foundation tones they had swallowed down
And these the corn-crakes fashioned with their beaks.
Ten thousand storks were carrying up the bricks
And lapwings helped and the other water birds,
T bring the water p into th a r
Pe Who ba e aloft the mortar for them?
M s. Herons
I bods.
Pe But ho did they get the mort r in?
Mes O that was most i n ousl contri ed
The geese struck down their feet nd slid them under
Like shovels, and so hea ed it o the hods.
Pe Then is there anything that *feet* can t do?
Mes And then the ducks, with girdles round their waists,
Carried the bricks and up th swallows flew
Like serving lads, carryin beh d th em ea h
His trowel, and the mortar in their mouths.
Pe Then why should men hire h reli gs a y more!
Well, well, go on who was it finished off
The great all s wood ork?
M Canny Pelica s,
Excellent workmen, hew with hug beaks
Gat timber and the uproar as th y hewed
Was lik an arsenal when ships ar b ilding
Now every gate ay ha t gate fa t barred
And watched the whol wa round a d birds are pacing
Their beats, nd carrying bells, e erywhe e
The guards are tationed d the beacons blaz
On ery tower But I m t hurry off
And ash myself. You manage what remains.
Exit

Ch. O man, what ails you? Do ou feel su prised
T hear th build ng has been built so soon?
Pe By all the God I d d w ll I ma
In ery truth it seems to me like—lies.
B t see! a guard a messen r from th ce
I running to ards us w th a war-dance look!
Enter a GUARD
Guard Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!
Pe Wh hat up n w?
G A terr bl thing has happened
One of the Gods, f Zeus Gods, ha just
G ing our j ckdaw sent els th l p
Shot through the gates nd flown i t the a
P A dreadful deed! A wicked scandalous deed!
Whi h f th Gods?
G We k ow not Wings h had
So much know
P Ye hould ha sent t nce
The ci e guard hot pursuit
G We sent
The mounted a hers, th t thousand falco s,
All w th ther t l red n fight g trim,
Ha k, buzzard ulture ea le eagl o l
Yea, Eth brates w th th whizz nd whirr
Of beating pini s, s th seek the God

As and he s near meth nks he s ery near
He s somewhere here
Pe A sl ng a sling I say!
Arro s and bows! Fall in my merry men all!
Shoot smite be resolute A sling! a sl ng!
Ch War s begun ine pressive war
War is begun t xt the God and me!
Look out look out through the cloud wrapt air
Wh ch erst the Darkness of Erebus bare
Lest a God slip by and we fa l to see
Glance ea r-eyed on every side
For close at hand the winged sound I hear
Of some Immortal hurtling through the Sky
Enter IRIS
Pe Ho! whither away th re? whither away? Stop! stop!
St p where you are! keep quiet! stay! remain!
Who what whence are you? where do you come from? Quick!
Iris Whence do I come? F om the Olympian Gods.
Pe Your name! What is it? Sloop o Head-dress?
I Iris
The fleet
Pe The Paralus, or the Salaminian?
I Why what s all thi ?
Pe Fly up, some buzzard there,
Fly up, and seize her
Ir Me! Seize *me* do you say?
What the plague s th s?
Pe You ll find to your cost directly
Ir Well now this passes!
Pe Answer! By what gates
Got you w thi i the c ty wall M ss Min ?
I I faith, I know not f llow by what gates
Pe You hear the jade how she p evaricates!
Saw you the daw commanders? What no ans er?
Where your sto k pass?
I My patience what do yo mean?
Pe You n ver got o e?
I Ha e y u lost your wits?
Pe Did n bird-capta n t ck label on you?
I O *me?* N stuck a label *w tch on me*
Pe So then you tho ght in this sly stealthy way
To fl through Chaos nd a realm not *yours?*
I And b what ro te then ought the Gods to fly?
Pe I faith, I know not O ly not by th s.
This is a trespass! If u got your ri hts,
Of ll the Ir ses that r we
You d be most justly seized and put to death
I But I am deathless.
P All th same fo that
You should ha e d ed A p etty thin f rsooth,
If whilst all lse bey us, you the Gods
Run ri t d f get that you in tur
Mu t lear to yield obedienc t yo r betters
B t tell me wh re d you na igat yo r wings?
I I? From the Father to ma kind I m fly ng
To bid th m on their bullock la ghtering hearths
Slay sheep t the Olympian Gods, and team
The streets w th sa our

Pe What do you say? What Gods?
Ir What Gods? To us the Gods in Heaven of course
Pe (*with supreme contempt*) What are *you* Gods?
Ir What other Gods exist?
Pe Birds are now Gods to men and men must slay
Victims to them and not by Zeus to Zeus
Ir *O fool fool fool! Stir not the mighty wrath*
Of angry Gods lest Justice with the spade
Of vengeful Zeus demolish all thy race
And fiery vapour with Licymnian strokes
Incinerate thy palace and thyself!
Pe Now listen girl have done with that bombast
(Don t move) A Lydian or a Phrygian is it
You think to terrify with words like those?
Look here If Zeus keep troubling me I ll soon
Incinerate his great Amphion s domes
And halls of state with eagles carrying fire
And up against him to high heaven I ll send
More than six hundred stout Porphyrion rail
All clad in leopard skins Yet I remember
When one Porphyrion gave him toil enough
And as for you his waiting maid if you
Keep troubling me with your outrageous ways
I ll outrage *you* and you ll be quite surprised
To find the strength of an old man like me
Ir O shame upon you wretch your words and you
Pe Now then begone shoo shoo! Eurax patax!
Ir My father won t stand this I vow he won t
Pe Now Zeus a mercy maiden fly you off
Incinerate some younger man than I *Exit* IRIS
Ch *Never again shall the Zeus born Gods*
Never again shall they pass this way!
Never again through this realm of ours
Shall men send up to the heavenly Powers
The savour of beasts which on earth they slay!

Pe Well but that herald whom we sent to men
'Tis strange if he should nevermore return
Enter HERALD
Herald O Peisthetaerus O thou wisest best
Thou wisest deepest happiest of mankind
Most glorious most—O give the word!
Pe What news?
He Accept this golden crown wherewith all peoples
Crown and revere thee for thy wisdom s sake!
Pe I do What makes them all revere me so?
He *O thou who hast built the ethereal glorious*

Dost thou not know how men revere thy name
And burn with ardour for this realm of thine?
Why till ye built this city in the air
All men had gone Laconian mad they went
Long haired half starved unwashed Socratified
With scytals in their hands but O the change!
They are all bird mad now and imitate
The birds and joy to do whate er birds do
Soon as they rise from bed at early dawn
They settle down on laws as we on lawns
And then they brood upon their leaves and leaflets
And feed their fill upon a crop of statutes
So undisguised their madness that full oft
The names of birds are fastened on to men
One limping tradesman now is known as Partridge
They dub Menippus Swallow and Opuntius
Blind Raven Philocles is Crested Lark
Theagenes is nicknamed Sheldrake now
Lycurgus Ibis Chaerephon the Vampire
And Syracosius Jay whilst Meidias there
Is called the Quail aye and he s like a quail
Flipped on the head by some quail filliper
So fond they are of birds that all are singing
Songs where a swallow figures in the verse
Or goose or may be widgeon or ring dove
Or wings or even the scantiest shred of feather
So much from earth And let me tell you this
More than ten thousand men will soon be here
All wanting wings and taloned modes of life
Somehow or other you must find them wings
Pe O then by Zeus no time for dallying now
Quick run you in collect the crates and baskets
And fill them all with wings that done let Manes
Bring me them out whilst I remain in here
Receive the wingless travellers as they come
Ch Very soon fully manned will this City be called
If men in such numbers invade us
Pe So fortune continue to aid us
Ch O the love of my City the world has enthralled!
Pe (*to* MANES) Bring quicker the baskets they re packing
Ch For in what is it lacking
That a man for his home can require?
Here is Wisdom and Wit and each exquisite Grace
And here the unruffled benevolent face
Of Quiet and loving Desire
Pe Why what a lazy loon are you!
Come move a little faster do
Ch O see that he brings me a basket of wings
Rush out in a whirlwind of passion
And wallop him after this fashion
For the rogue is as slow as a donkey to go
Pe No pluck has your Manes tis true
Ch But now tis for *you*
The wings in due order to set
Both the musical wings and the wings of the seers
And the wings of the sea that as each one appears
The wings that he wants you can get
Pe O by the kestrels I can t keep my hands
From banging you you lazy crazy oaf
Enter a SIRE STRIKER
Sire Striker (*singing*) O that I might as an eagle be
Flying flying flying flying
Over the surge of the untilled sea!
Pe Not false methinks the tale our envoy told us.
For here comes one whose song is all of eagles.

S St Fie on t!
There nothing n this wo ld so sweet as fly n
I've quite a pass o for these same bird laws.
In fact I m gone bird mad and fl and lon
To dw ll w th you, and hunger f your laws
Pe Which of our la s? for birds ha many laws.
S St All! All! but most of all that jolly law
Which lets a ou g st r throttle and beat h s father
Pe A e if a ocker I beat hi father h re,
T d ind ed ac et h m quite a—Man
S St That wh I mo ed up hither and would fain
Throttle m fath r and get all he has.
Pe But there s an anci nt law m g the birds,
You'll find it in the t ll ts of th storks
When the old sto k h s b ou ht h s to kli gs up
And all a fully fled ed for fl ht the they
Must in their turn maintain the to k the r father
S St A jolly lot I good I e gained b com g
If now I e g t to feed m fath too!
Pe N v my poor bo you car e here well disposed,
And so I ll n you like n o phan bird
And here a new u est not a bad o e,
B t what I learnt myself when I was oung
Don t beat your fath r lad but take th w ng
And grasp this pu of battl in your hand
And think th rest game cock s ma tial comb
No mar h keep guard li e n ou sold r pay
And let your father be If y u wa t fight ng
F off to Thrac ward re ns, and fight there
S St By Dion sus, I beli ve you re ght
I'll do t too
P You'll h w you sense by Zeus
Exit ... *enter* C ... E
Cinesias (*singing*) O the lightest f w I m soaring n high,
Lo ... from measur t mea ure I fly
Pe Bless me th creat w nt pack f wi ost
C (*a ging*) And e er th n w I am fl tt n to find,
W th timorles bod nd t m rle s mind
P W clasp Cinesias, ma f lind ws th
Wh t th world ha o wh led ou pla foot hith r?
C (*singing*) T be a bird b rd I l ng
For hung le f thrilli g song
P O p that si g p ther peak n p ose.
C O gi e me wi gs, that I ma soar o h gh,
And plu k poet fancies fr m th louds.
Wild the birthn w nds, nd d ing sn ws.
P What d ou plu k you fanc es from the loud?
C Why ou wh t trad d pend pon the louds
What a our nobles d th mbs but thin
Of ai nd m t nd pu pl gleams g d pths,
And feath rs wh lw gs? You hall hea and judge
P No, I won t
C By H racles you shall
I'll go through all the air dear fri nd for you
(*S g g*) Shadow s mons of
W n spread n air tread ng
Taper necked b rds.
Pe Stead there!
C (*s g g*) B und ng al n on the path to the seas,
Fain would I float o the stream of the breeze
Pe O by th Powers, I ll stop yo r streams and breezes
C (*a ging*) F rst do I stra on a southerl wa
Then to the northward my bod I bear
Cutt ng a harbourless furrow of a r
PEISTHETAERUS *beg ns to flap h m rou d the stage*
A nice trick that a pl asant trick old man
Pe O you don t like being feathery whirl winged do you?
C That s how you treat the Cyclian-ch rus-trainer
For whose possession all the tr bes compete!
Pe Well, will you stop and train a chorus here
For Leotrophides, all flyin birds,
Crake-opp dans?
C You re jeerin me that s plain
But I won t stop be sure of that, until
I get me wings, and peragrate the air *Exit*
Enter SYCOPHANT
Sycoph nt (*singing*) Who be these on varied wing, b ds who ha e not anything?
O tell m swallow tell me t ll me true
O long win ed bird O bi d of ar ed h el
P Come it s no joke this plague that s broken out
Her c mes another warbl ng like the rest
Sy (*s gi g*) Again I a k the tell me tell m true
O l n winged bird O b rd of a ed h el
Pe At hi o n cloak h catch appears to point
Mor than one swallow *th t* requires, I m thinking
Sy Wh h is the man that wings th visito s?
P H stands befo e you What do you please to want?
Sy Wings, wi , I want You need n t ask me twice
P Is it Pell e that you e go t fly to?
Sy No, no b t I m somp u for the Isles
Info mer—
P O the j lly trade y u e got!
Sy And I an suit hatcher so I want th wings
To scare the c t es, servin writs all round
Pe You ll summon th m more clev ly I suppose
To the tune of wings?
Sy No but t dodge the pirates,
I ll then m fl ing homeward with the cranes,
First swall w g d wn l t of su ts for ballast
P I thi u busi ess? you a st rdy youngster
Live b r f ming o the stranger folk?
Sy What can I do? I n learnt to d g
Pe O but by Ze s the e many an honest calling
Wh nc m like you can earn a li lihood
By mean mo e suitable than hatching suits.

Sy Come come no preaching wing me wing me please
Pe I wing you now by talking
Sy What by talk
Can you wing men?
Pe Undoubtedly By talk
All men are winged
Sy All!
Pe Have *you never heard*
The way the fathers in the barbers shops
Talk to the children saying things like these
Diitrephes has winged my youngster so
By specious talk he s all for chariot-driving
Aye says another and that boy of mine
Flutters his wings at every Tragic Play
Sy So then by talk they are winged
Pe Exactly so
Through talk the mind flutters and soars aloft
And all the man takes wing And so even now
I wish to turn you winging you by talk
To some more honest trade
Sy But I *don t* wish
Pe How then?
Sy I ll not disgrace my bringing up
I ll ply the trade my father s fathers plied
So wing me please with light quick-darting wings
Falcon s or kestrel s so I ll serve my writs
Abroad on strangers then accuse them here
Then dart back there again
Pe I understand
So when they come they ll find the suit decided
And payment ordered
Sy Right! you understand
Pe And while they *re* sailing hither you ll fly there
And seize their goods for payment
Sy That s the trick!
Round like a top I ll whizz
Pe I understand
A whipping top and here by Zeus I ve got
Fine Corcyraean wings to set you whizzing
Sy *O it s a whip!*
Pe Nay friend a pair of wings
To set you spinning round and round to-day
(*Striking him*)
Sy O! O! O! O!
Pe Come wing yourself from hence
Wobble away you most confounded rascal!
I ll make you spin! I ll law perverting trick you!
Now let us gather up the wings and go

Exit PEISTHETAERUS *with* SYCOPHANT

Chorus

We ve been flying we ve been flying
Over sea and land espying
Many a wonder strange and new
First a tree of monstrous girth
Tall and stout yet nothing worth
For tis rotten through and through
It has got no heart and we
Heard it called Cleonymus tree
In the spring it blooms gigantic,
Fig traducing sycophantic
Yet in falling leaf time yields
Nothing but a fall of shields

Next a spot by darkness skirted
Spot by every light deserted
Lone and gloomy we descried
There the human and divine
Men with heroes mix and dine
Freely save at even tide
'Tis not safe for mortal men
To encounter heroes then
Then the great Orestes looming
Vast and awful through the glooming
On their right a stroke delivering
Leaves them palsied stript and shivering

Enter PROMETHEUS *concealing his face probably recalling some scene in the* Prometheus Fire bringer *of Aeschylus*

Prometheus O dear! O dear! Pray Heaven that Zeus won t see me!
Where s Peisthetaerus?

Enter PEISTHETAERUS

Pe Why whatever is here?
What s this enwrapment?
Pro See you any God
Following behind me there?
Pe Not I by Zeus
But who are you?
Pro And what s the time of day?
Pe *The time of day? A little after noon*
(*Shouting*) But who are you?
Pro Ox loosing time or later?
Pe Disgusting idiot!
Pro What s Zeus doing now?
The clouds collecting or the clouds dispersing?
Pe Out on you stupid!
Pro Now then I ll unwrap
Pe My dear Prometheus!
Pro Hush! don t shout like that
Pe *Why what s up now?*
Pro Don t speak my name so loudly
Twould be my ruin if Zeus see me here
But now I ll tell you all that s going on
Up in the sky if you ll just take the umbrella
And hold it over that no God may see me
Pe Ha! Ha!
The crafty thought! Prometheus like all over
Get under then make haste and speak out freely
Pro Then listen
Pe Speak I m listening never fear
Pro All s up with Zeus!
Pe Good gracious me! since when?
Pro Since first you built your city in the air
For never from that hour does mortal bring
Burnt-offerings to the Gods or savours steam
Ascend to heaven from flesh of victims slain
So now we fast a Thesmophorian fast
No altars burning and the Barbarous Gods
Half starved and gibbering like Illyrians vow
That they ll come marching down on Zeus unless

le gets the marts reopened and the bits
Of a ory inward introduced once mo e
Pe What are there really other Gods, Bar batians,
Up abov you?
Pro Ba barians? Yes thence comes
The ancestral God of Execestides
Pe And what s the name of these Barbarian Gods?
Pro The name? Triballians.
P Aye I understand
'Tis from that quarter Tribulation comes
Pro Exactly so. And n w I tell vou thi
En voys will soon be here to treat f r peace
Sent down by Zeus and those Triballians there
But make no peace mind that unless k n Zeus
Restores th sc ptre t the B rds gain
And gi es yourself Miss So e eignty to wife.
P And ho s Miss Sovereignt ?
Pro The lo eliest girl.
'Tis she who keeps the thande bolt of Zeus,
And all his stores—good c u sels, happy laws,
Sound c mmon sense dock ards, abus v e speech
All his three-obols, and tl e man who pays th m
Pe Th she keeps *everythi* !
Pro Of course she does.
W in her from Zeus, and you *ll* h e *everyth ng*
That ed h s that I mu ht tell you this,
You know I m lways w ll-d sposed to m n
Pe Ay but f you we could t firy u fish
Pro And I hate e ery God you know that, do t you?
Pe Yes, hatred of the Gods vou lways f lt it
Pro A regular Timo I but tis time to go
Let ha e the mb ella th n f Zeus pe cei es me,
He'll think I m follo ing th B sk t bea er
Pe Her take the hair nd act the Chair girl too.

Exeunt OMETHEU *and* PEISTHETAE S

Choru

Next saw a ght appall g
Socrates, nwa hed was call g
Spirit f m the lake below
(T as on that enchanted ground
Whe th Shadow feet a found)
Th P sander came t k ow
W ch p it cowards lack
Socrates could conj back
Then camel lamb b slew
Lik Od sse s, b t thdr w
Whil t he camel blood upon
Poun ed th Vampire Chaer ephon

Enter PO EIDO HER CLES *a d* TRI LLI N
P seidon There fellow vs, full in sight the to n
Whereto we bound Cloud uckoob ry stands!
(*T th t* LLI)
You hat re you at wearing your cloak left sided?
Shift t round r ghtly so. My goodness, you re
A born Laispodias! O Democracy
What will you bring us to at last I wonder
If oting Gods elect a clown l ke th s!
Tribal an. Hands off there will ver?
Pos Hang you you re by far
The uncouthest God I e er came across
Now Heracles, what s to be done?
Herael s You have heard
What I propose I d throttle the man off hand
Whoever h is that dares blockade the Gods.
Pos My dear good fellow you forget we are sent
To treat for peace
Her I d throttle him all the more
Re enter PEISTHET ERUS
Pe (*to servants*) Hand me the grater bring the sil phium you
Now then the cl eese blow up the fire a little
Pos We three immortal Gods with wo *ds of greet ing*
Salute the Man!
P I *m grating silphium now*
Her What s this the flesh of?
Pe B*rds*! B rds tried and sentenced
For rising up agai st the popular party
Am ngst th birds
Her Then you grate silphium, do you,
O er them first?
Pe O wele me Heracles!
What brings you hither?
Pos We are envoys, sent
Down by the Gods t settle terms of peace
Servant Th re s no more oil remaining n the flask.
Her O dear! and b d s-flesh should be rich and glisten g
Pos We Gods gain noth ng by the war and you
Th nk what ye ll get by bei g friend with us
Ra n water in the pools, and halcyo day
Shall be yo r perquisites the whole year through
W ve ample powers to settle on these terms.
P It was not w who ev r w hed for war
A d n w f even now ye com prepared
With fair proposals ye will find u ready
To treat f r pea e What I call fair is this
Let Zeu rest re the sceptre to the b ds,
And all make friends. If ye accept this offer
I ask th en ys to share our banq et
Her I m altog th r satisfied and vote—
Po (*interrupting*)
What wretch? A fool and glutton that s what you !
What? would you rob our father of hi kingdom?
Pe Aye say you so? Why y ll be mightier far
Y God abo f B ds bear rule below
Now men go skulking nd neath the clouds,
And swea false oaths, and call the God t witness.
B t wi en v e got the B rds for your all es,
If a man swear by the Raven and by Ze s,
The Ra n w l com by and unawares
Fly up and swoop and pe k the perju s eye out
Po Now by Posead n there s som sense in that.
Her And so say I.
Pe (TO TR B LLIAN) And you?

Sy Come come no preaching wing me wing me please
Pe I wing you now by talking
Sy What by talk
Can you wing men?
Pe Undoubtedly By talk
All men are winged
Sy All!
Pe Have you never heard
The way the fathers in the barbers shops
Talk to the children saying things like these
Diitrephes has winged my youngster so
By *specious talk he s all for chariot driving*
Aye says another and that boy of mine
Flutters his wings at every Tragic Play
Sy So then by talk they are winged
Pe Exactly so
Through talk the mind flutters and soars aloft
And all the man takes wing And so even now
I wish to turn you winging you by talk
To some more honest trade
Sy But I *don t* wish
Pe How then?
Sy I ll not disgrace my bringing up
I ll ply the trade my father s fathers plied
So wing me please with light quick-darting wings
Falcon s or kestrel s so I ll serve my writs
Abroad on strangers then accuse them here
Then dart back there again
Pe I understand
So when they come they ll find the suit decided
And payment ordered
Sy Right! you understand
Pe And while they re sailing hither you ll fly there
And seize their goods for payment
Sy That s the trick!
Round like a top I ll whizz
Pe I understand
A whipping top and here by Zeus I ve got
Fine Corcyraean wings to set you whizzing
Sy O it s a whip!
Pe Nay friend a pair of wings
To set you spinning round and round to-day
(*Striking him*)
Sy O! O! O! O!
Pe Come wing yourself from hence
Wobble away you most confounded rascal!
I ll make you spin! I ll law perverting trick you!
Now let us gather up the wings and go
Exit PEISTHETAERUS *with* SYCOPHANT

Chorus

We ve been flying we ve been flying
Over sea and land espying
Many a wonder strange and new
First a tree of monstrous girth
Tall and stout yet nothing worth
For *tis rotten* through and through
It has got no heart and we
Heard it called Cleonymus tree
In the spring it blooms gigantic,
Fig traducing sycophantic
Yet in falling leaf time yields
Nothing but a fall of shields

Next a spot by darkness skirted
Spot by every light deserted
Lone and gloomy we descried
There the human and divine
Men with heroes, mix and dine
Freely save at even tide
'Tis not safe for mortal men
To encounter heroes then
Then the great Orestes looming
Vast and awful through the glooming
On their right a stroke delivering
Leaves them palsied stript and shivering

Enter PROMETHEUS *concealing his face probably recalling some scene in the* Prometheus Fire bringer *of Aeschylus*

Prometheus O dear! O dear! Pray Heaven that Zeus won t see me!
Where s Peisthetaerus?
Enter PEISTHETAERUS
Pe Why whatever is here?
What s this enwrapment?
Pro See you any God
Following behind me there?
Pe Not I by Zeus
But who are you?
Pro And what s the time of day?
Pe The time of day? A little after noon
(*Shouting*) But who are you?
Pro Ox loosing time or later?
Pe Disgusting idiot!
Pro What s Zeus doing now?
The clouds collecting or the clouds dispersing?
Pe Out on you stupid!
Pro Now then I ll unwrap
Pe My dear Prometheus!
Pro Hush! don t shout like that
Pe Why what s up now?
Pro Don t speak my name so loudly
Twould be my ruin if Zeus see me here
But now I ll tell you all that s going on
Up in the sky if you ll just take the umbrella
And hold it over that no God may see me
Pe Ha! Ha!
The crafty thought! Prometheus like all over
Get under then make haste and speak out freely
Pro Then listen
Pe Speak I m listening never fear
Pro All s up with Zeus!
Pe Good gracious me! since when?
Pro Since first you built your city in the air
For never from that hour does mortal bring
Burnt-offerings to the Gods or savoury steam
Ascend to heaven from flesh of victims slain
So now we fast a Thesmophorian fast
No altars burning and the Barbarous Gods
Half starved and gibbering like Illyrians, vow
That they ll come marching down on Zeus unless

ℍ gets the marts reopened and the bits
Of savory inward introduced once more
Pe What, ar there really other Gods, B r
barians,
Up above you?
Pro Ba barians? Yes thence comes
The ancestral God of Execest des.
Pe And hat s the name of these Barbarian
Gods?
Pro The name? Triballians.
Pe Aye I understa d
'Tis from that quarter Tribulation comes.
Pro Exactly so. And now I tell you this
Envoys w ll soon be here to treat for peace
Sent down by Zeus and those Triballians there
B t make no peace unless that u less ki Zeus
Restores the sc pt e to the B rds a
And g es yourself Miss So er gnty to wife
Pe And ho s Miss Sov re enty?
Pro The lovel est girl.
'Tis she who keeps the th nde bolts of Zeus,
And all his stores—good counsels, happy laws,
Sound common sense dockyards, bust e peech
All his three-obols, and the man who pays th m
P Th n she keeps everyth g!
Pro Of course h does.
Win h r from Zeu and you ll ha e *everything*
I hastened h r th t I mi ht tell y u this,
You know I am al ays w ll-disposed to men
Pe Aye, but fo yo w co ld t fry ur fish
Pro And I hate every God you know that don t
you?
Pe Yes, hatred of the God s always f lt t
Pro A r gular Timon! but tis time to go
Let have the mb ella th n if Zeus perce es
me
H ll think I m follow ng th Basket bea er
Pe Here tak the chai nd ct the Chair g l
too

Exeunt ᴏᴍᴇᴛʜᴇᴜ *and* ᴘᴇɪsᴛʜ ᴛᴀᴇʀᴜs

Chorus

Next w saw a sight appalling
Socrates, wa hed wa callin
Spirit f m the lake below
('Twas on that en hanted ground
Wher th Shadow feet a e found)
Th re P sander came to know
If th pirit cow ds lack
Socrat s would com back
Then camel lamb he slew
Lik Od sseus, but w thd ew
Whil t he cam l s blood oon
Pounced th V mp e Cha phon

Enter ᴘᴏs ᴅᴏɴ ʜᴇʀᴀᴄʟᴇs *and* ᴛʀɪ ᴀʟʟɪᴀɴ
P eido Th re f ll w o s, full in sight the
t n
Wher t w re bound Cloudcuckoobury stand !
(T th ᴛʀɪ ʟʟɪ ɴ)
You hat e y t wearing your cloak l ft
sided?
Shift it round r ghtly so. My goodness, *you re*

A born Laispodias! O Democracy
What will you bri g us to at last I wonder
If oting Gods elect a clown l ke this!
Triballian Hands off there will yer?
Pos Hang you you re by far
Th uncouthest God I ever came across.
Now Heracles, what s to be done?
Heracles You have heard
What I propose I d th ottle the man off hand
Whoe er he is that dares blockade the Gods
Pos My dear good fellow you f rget we are sent
To treat for peace
Her I d throttle him all the more

Re enter ᴘᴇɪsᴛʜᴇᴛᴀᴇʀᴜs

Pe (*to servants*) Hand me th grater bring the sil
phium you
Now then the cheese blow up the fire a little
Pos We th ee immo tal Gods, with words of greet
ing
Salute the Man!
Pe I m grating silphium now
Her What s this the flesh of?
Pe B rds! Bi ds tried and sentenced
F r rising up aga nst the popular party
A non st the birds.
Her Then you grate silphium do you,
Over them first?
P O welc me Heracles!
What brings you hither?
Pos We are en oys sent
Down by the Gods to settle terms of peace
Servant There s no mo e oil ema ni g n the flask.
Her O dea l and bird flesh should be ch and
gliste ng
Pos W Gods gai noth ng by the war and you
Th nk what ye ll g t by be ng friends w th us
Ra wat r in the pools, and halcyon days
Shall be your perquisites the whole year through
We e ample powers to settl on these terms.
P It was not we who e er wished for war
And now s e en now y come prepared
W th fair proposals ye will fi d us ready
To treat for peace What I call fair is this
Let Zeus resto the sceptre to th birds.
A d all make friends If y accept this offer
I a k the en oy in to sha e ur banquet
Her I m altogether satisfied and vote—
P s (*interrupting*)
What w etch? A fool nd glutto that s what *you*
re!
What! would you rob your father f h k ngdom?
P Ay say y u so? Why ye ll be m ghtier far
Ye Gods abo e f B ds bea rule below
Now m n g skulking u *d meath the clouds*
A d swear false oaths a d call the Gods to witness,
But when ye ve got th B *rds for your all es*
If a ma wear by the Ra en a f by Zeus,
Th Ra e will come by a d una ares
Fly up nd swoop and pe k the perjurer s eye out
Po Now by Poseidon th re som sense in that.
Her And so say I
re (t ʀɪ ʟʟɪ) And y u?

Tr Persuasitree
Pe You see? he quite assents And now I ll give you
Another instance of the good ye ll gain
If a man vow a victim to a God
And then would shuffle off with cunning words
Saying in greedy lust The Gods wait long
This too we ll make him pay you
Pos Tell me how?
Pe Why when that man is counting out his money
Or sitting in his bath a kite shall pounce
Down unawares and carry off the price
Of two fat lambs and bear it to the God
Her I say again I vote we give the sceptre
Back to the Birds
Pos Ask the Triballian next
Her You there do you want a drubbing?
Tr Hidey thine
I se stickybeatums
Her There! he s all for me
Pos Well then if so you wish it so we ll have it
Her (*to* PEISTHETAERUS) Hi! we accept your terms about the sceptre
Pe By Zeus there s one thing more I ve just remembered
Zeus may retain his Hera if he will
But the young girl Miss Sovereignty he must
Give me to wife
Pos This looks not like a treaty
Let us be journeying homewards
Pe As you will
Now cook be sure you make the gravy rich
Her Why man alive Poseidon where are you off to?
What are we going to fight about one woman?
Pos What shall we do?
Her Do? Come to terms at once
Pos You oaf he s gulling you and you can t see it
Well it s yourself you are ruining If Zeus
Restore th kingdom to the Birds and die
You ll be a pauper You are the one to get
Whatever money Zeus may leave behind him
Pe O! O! the way he s trying to cozen you!
Hist step aside I want to whisper something
Your uncle s fooling you poor dupe By law
No shred of all your father s money falls
To you Why you re a bastard you re not heir
Her Eh! What? A bastard? I?
Pe Of course you are
Your mother was an alien Bless the fool
How did you think Athene could be Heiress
(Being a girl) if she had lawful brethren?
Her Well but suppose my father leaves me all
As bastard s heritage?
Pe The law won t let him
Poseidon here who now excites you on
Will be the first to claim the money then
As lawful brother and your father s heir
Why here I ll read you Solon s law about it

A bastard is to have no right of inheritance if there be lawful children And if there be no lawful children th goods are to fall to the next of kin

Her What! none of all my father s goods to fall
To me?
Pe No not one farthing! tell me this,
Has he enrolled you ever in the guild?
Her He never has I ve often wondered why
Pe Come don t look up assault and battery wise
Join *us* my boy I ll make you autocrat
And feed you all your days on pigeon s milk
Her I m quite convinced you re right about the girl
I said Restore her and I say so now
Pe (*to* POSEIDON) And what say you?
Pos I vote the other way
Pe All rests with this Triballian What say you?
Tr Me gulna charmi grati Sovranau
Birdito stori
Her There! he said Restore her
Pos O no by Zeus he never said Restore her
He said to migrate as the swallows do
Her O then he said Restore her to the swallows
Pos You two conclude and settle terms of peace
Since you both vote it I will say no more
Her (*to* PEISTHETAERUS) We re quite prepared to give you all you ask
So come along come up to heaven yourself
And take Miss Sovereignty and all that s there
Pe So then these birds were slaughtered just in time
To grace our wedding banquet
Her Would you like me
To stay and roast the meat while you three go?
Pos To *roast* the meat! To *taste* the meat you mean
Come along do
Her I d have enjoyed it though
Pe Ho there within! bring out a wedding robe

Exeunt PEISTHETAERUS POSEIDON TRIBALLIAN *and* HERACLES

Ch In the fields of Litigation
Near the Water clock a nation
With its tongue its belly fills
With its tongue it sows and reaps
Gathers grapes and figs in heaps
With its tongue the soil it tills
For a Barbarous tribe it passes
Philips all and Gorgiases
And from this tongue bellying band
Everywhere on Attic land
People who a victim slay
Always cut the tongue away

Enter MESSENGER

Messenger O all successful more than tongue can tell!
O ye thrice blessèd winged race of birds
Welcome your King returning to his halls!
He comes no Star has ever gleamed so fair
Sparkling refulgent in its gold rayed home
The full far flashing splendour of the Sun
Ne er shone so gloriously as he who comes
Bringing a bride too beautiful for words
Wielding the wingèd thunderbolt of Zeus
Up to Heaven s highest vault sweet sight ascends
Fragrance ineffable while gentlest airs

The fumes of incense scatter far and wide.
For comes he is here! Now let the heavenly Muse
Open her lips with pure auspicious strains.

Enter PEISTHETAERUS *and his* SOVEREIGNTY

Chorus

Back with you! out with you!
off with you! up with you!
Flying round
Welcome the Blessed with blessedness crowned.
O O for the youth and the beauty O!
Well hast thou wed for the town of the Birds.

Great are the blessings, and mighty and wonderful,
Which through his favour our nation possesses.
Welcome them back, both himself and Miss Sovereignty
Welcome with nuptial and bridal addresses.

Mid just such a song hymenaean
Aforetime the Destinies led
The King of the thrones empyrean
The Ruler of Gods, to the bed
Of Hera his beautiful bride
Hymen, O Hymenaeus!

And Love, with his pinions of gold
Came down all blooming and spruce,
As groomsman and squire to behold
The wedding of Hera and Zeus,
Of Zeus and his beautiful bride.
Hymen, O Hymenaeus!
Hymen, O Hymenaeus!

Pe I delight in your hymns, I delight in your songs
Your words I admire
Ch. Now sing of the trophies he brings us from Heaven
The earth-crashing thunders, deadly and dire,
And the lightning's angry flashes of fire
And the dread white bolt of the levin.
Blaze of the lightning so terribly beautiful,
Golden and grand!
Fire flashing javelin, glittering ever in
Zeus's right hand!
Earth-crashing thunder the hoarsely resounding the
Bringer of showers!
He is your Master tis he that is shaking the
Earth with your powers!
All that was Zeus's of old
Now is our hero's alone
Sovereignty fair to behold
Partner of Zeus on his throne
Now is forever his own
Hymen O Hymenaeus!
Pe Now follow on dear feathered tribes,
To see us wed to see us wed
Mount up to Zeus's golden floor
And nuptial bed and nuptial bed
And O my darling reach thine hand
And take my wing and dance with me
And I will lightly bear thee up,
And carry thee and carry thee.
Ch Raise the joyous Paean-cry
Raise the song of Victory
Io Paean alalala
Mightiest of the Powers, to thee!

Tr Persuasitree

Pe You see? he quite assents And now I ll give you
Another instance of the good ye ll gain
If a man vow a victim to a God
And then would shuffle off with cunning words
Saying in greedy lust The Gods wait long
This too we ll make him pay you

Pos Tell me how?

Pe Why when that man is counting out his money
Or sitting in his bath a kite shall pounce
Down unawares and carry off the price
Of two fat lambs and bear it to the God

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Back to the Birds

Pos Ask the Triballian next

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Give me to wife

Pos This looks not like a treaty
Let us be journeying homewards

Pe As you will
Now cook be sure you make the gravy rich

Her Why man alive Poseidon where are you off to?
What are we going to fight about one woman?

Pos What shall we do?

Her Do? Come to terms at once

Pos *You oaf he s gulling you and you can t see it*
Well it s yourself you are ruining If Zeus
Restore the kingdom to the Birds and die
You ll be a pauper You are the one to get
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Pos *I vote the other way*

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Pos To *roast* the meat! To *taste* the meat you mean
Come along do

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H comes b is her ! Now let the heavenly Muse
Ope her lips with pure auspicious strains.
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Chorus

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off with oul up with you!
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W hast thou wed for th town f th Birds.

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Which throu h h fa our our nation possesses.
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ereignty
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The kin of the thrones empyrean,
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Of Hera his bea tiful bride
Hymen, O H menaeus!

And Love, with his pinions of gold
Came driv all bloomin and spruce,
As groomsman nd squire to behold
The weddin of H ra and Zeus,
Of Zeus nd his beautiful bride.
Hymen, O Hymenaeus!
Hymen, O Hymenaeus!

Pe I deli ht n your hymns, I deli ht in your songs
Your words I admire.
Ch. Now sin of the trophies he brings us from
Hea en
The earth-crashin thunders, deadly and dire,
And the li htnin s an ry fla hes of fire
And the dread white bolt of the le in.
Blaze of the li htning so terribly bea tiful
Golden and grand!
Fire flashin ja elin glittering ever in
Zeus s right hand!
Earth-crash ng thunder the hoarsel resounding the
Bringer of showers!
He s your Ma ter tis he that is shakin the
Earth with your powers!
All that wa Zeus s of old
Now is our hero alon
Sov reignty fair to behold
Partner of Zeus on h throne
Now is fore er his own
H men, O Hymenaeus!
Pe Now follow on dear feathered tribes,
To see us wed to see us wed
Mount up to Zeus s golden floor
And nuptial bed and nuptial bed
And O my da lin each thine hand
And tak my wing and dance with me
And I will li htly bear thee up
And carry thee and carry thee
Ch. Raise the jo ous Paean-cry
Raise the song of Victory
Io Paean, alalalae
Mightiest of the Powers, to thee!

THE FROGS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

XANTHIAS *servant of Dionysus*	HOSTESS *keeper of cook shop*
DIONYSUS	PLATHANE *her partner*
HERACLES	EURIPIDES
A CORPSE	AESCHYLUS
CHARON	PLUTO
AEACUS	CHORUS OF FROGS
A MAID SERVANT OF PERSEPHONE	CHORUS OF BLESSED MYSTICS

The scene shows the house of HERACLES *in the background There enter two travellers* DIONYSUS *on foot in his customary yellow robe and buskins but also with the club and lion s skin of Heracles and his servant* XANTHIAS *on a donkey carrying the luggage on a pole over his shoulder*

Xanthias Shall I crack any of those old jokes master
At which the audience never fail to laugh?
Dionysus Aye what you will except I m getting crushed
Fight shy of that I m sick of that already
Xa Nothing else smart?
Di Aye save my shoulder s aching
Xa Come now that comical joke?
Di With all my heart
Only be careful not to shift your pole
And—
Xa What?
Di And vow that you ve a belly ache
Xa May I not say I m overburdened so
That if none ease me I must ease myself?
Di For mercy s sake not till I m going to vomit
Xa What! must I bear these burdens and not make
One of the jokes Ameipsias and Lycis
And Phrynichus in every play they write
Put in the mouths of all their burden bearers?
Di Don t make them no! I tell you when I see
Their plays and hear those jokes I come away
More than a twelvemonth older than I went
Xa O thrice unlucky neck of mine which now
Is *getting crushed* yet must not crack its joke!
Di Now is not this fine pampered insolence
When I myself Dionysus son of—*Pipkin*
Toil on afoot and let this fellow ride
Taking no trouble and no burden bearing?
Xa What don t I bear?
Di How can you when you re riding?
Xa Why I bear these
Di How?
Xa Most unwillingly
Di Does not the donkey bear the load you re bearing?
Xa Not what I bear myself by Zeus not he
Di How can you bear when you are borne yourself?
Xa Don t know but anyhow *my shoulder s aching*
Di Then since you say the donkey helps you not
You lift him up and carry him in turn
Xa O hang it all! why didn t I fight at sea?
You should have smarted bitterly for this
Di Get down you rascal I ve been trudging on
Till now I ve reached the portal where I m going
First to turn in Boy! Boy! I say there Boy!
Enter HERACLES *from house*
Heracles Who banged the door? How like a prancing Centaur
He drove against it! Mercy o me what s this?
Di Boy
Xa Yes
Di Did you observe?
Xa What?
Di How alarmed
He is
Xa Aye truly lest you ve lost your wits
He O by Demeter I can t choose but laugh
Biting my lips won t stop me Ha! ha! ha!
Di Pray you come hither I have need of you
He I vow I can t help laughing I can t help it
A lion s hide upon a yellow silk
A club and buskin! What s it all about?
Where were you going?
Di I was serving lately
Aboard the—Cleisthenes
He And fought?
Di And sank
More than a dozen of the enemy s ships
He You two?
Di We two
He And then I awoke and lo!
Di There as on deck I m reading to myself
The *Andromeda* a sudden pang of longing
Shoots through my heart you can t conceive how keenly
He How big a pang?
Di A small one Molon s size
He Caused by a woman?
Di No

P A boy?
Di. No, no.
He A man?
Di. Ah! ah!
P Was it for Cleisthenes?
Di. Don t mock me brother on my life I am
In a bad way such fierce desire consumes me.
H Aye little brother? how?
Di. I can t describe it
B t yet I'll tell you in riddling way
Ha e you e er felt a sudden lust for soup?
H Soup! Zeus a mercy yes ten thousand times.
Di I the thing clear or must I speak aga n?
H Not of the soup I m clear about the so p
Di. W ll, just that sort of pang de ours my heart
For lost Euripides.
H A dead man too
D And no one shall persuade me not t go
After th man.
P Do you mean below to Hades?
Di. And lower still, f there s a lower till.
He What on earth for?
Di. I want a genu e poet
For som are not, and those that a e ar b d
H What! does n t I pho h e?
Di. W ll, he s th sole
Good thing remaining if even he i good
For even of that I m not exactly certain
H If go you must there s Sophocles—h comes
Before Eur pides—why not take *him*?
Di. Not till I e tried I lop hon co tunes true
When h s alon apart from Sophocles.
Besides, Euripides, the craft rogue
Will find a thousand shift to g t away
B t *he* a easy here is easy the e
He But Agathon, wh re is he?
D H has gon and left us.
A genial poet, by his friend m h missed
H Gon wh ?
Di T jo th blessed in thei banquets.
H But what of Xenocles?
Di O he be ha ged!
H Pytha g ius?
Xa But ne e word of m
Not though my should chafed so t rribly
H B tha you t hoal f little songsters,
Tiredums by the m riad who can chatte
A furlong faster tha Euripides?
Di. Those be m intag lea ings, j bberers,
hoars
Of sw llo b oods, d grad rs f thei art
Who g t on horus, nd seen no mo
The Muses I one gained But O my friend
Sea h h ou w ll ou ll e find true
Creat e gen us, t g t thing things.
H Creat e? how do ou mea
Di I mean a man
Who ll dar som no l ent esome conceit
A Zeu hambe or T me foot, or th s,
"Twas no m mind that wor my tongu com
mitted
A little pe jury on ts own account.

He You like that style?
D Like it? I dote upon it
He I vow its ribald nonsense, and you know it
Di Rule not my mind you e got a house to
mind
He Really and truly though tis paltry stuff
Di Teach me to din !
Xa But never a word of me.
Di But tell me truly— twas for this I came
D essed up to mimic you—what friends received
And ent rtained y u when you went bel w
To bri g back Cerberus, in case I need them.
And tell me too the ha ens, founta ns, shops,
Roads, resting pla es, stews, refreshm nt rooms,
Towns, lodgings hostesses, with whom were found
The fewest bugs.
Xa But never word of me
He You are really game t go?
D O drop that can t you?
And tell me this of all the roads you know
Which s the q ickest way to g t to Hades?
I want one not too warm nor yet too cold
He Which shall I tell you first? which shall t be?
Ther one by rope and bench you launch away
And—hang yourself.
D No thank you that s too stifling
H Then the e s a track a short and beaten cut
By pestle and mortar
Di Hemlock, do you mean?
H Just so
Di No, that s too deathly cold a way
You ha e hardly sta ted ere your shins get numbed.
He Well, would you like steep and swift
descent?
Di Aye, that s the style my walking powers are
small.
He Go down to the Cerameicus.
D A d do what?
He Climb to the tower s top pinnacle—
Di And then?
He Observe the torch race started and when all
The multitude s shouting Let them go,"
Let yourself go.
Di Go! whither?
H To the gr und
D And lose, forsooth, two envel pes of brain.
I ll not try that
He Which *will* you try?
D The way
You we t yourself.
He A parlous vo age that
For first you ll come to an enormou lak
Of fathomless depth
D And how am I to cross?
He An ncient marine w ll ow you o e
In a wee boat so b The fa e s two bols
Di Fie! The powe two obols ha e the whole
world through!
How came they thither!
He Theseus took them do n
And next you'll see g eat snakes and savag monsters
In tens f thousands.

Di You needn t try to scare me
I m going to go
He Then weltering seas of filth
And ever rippling dung and plunged therein
Whoso has wronged the stranger here on earth
Or robbed his boy love of the promised pay
Or swinged his mother or profanely smitten
His father s cheek or sworn an oath forsworn
Or copied out a speech of Morsimus
Di There too perdie should *he* be plunged whoe er
Has danced the sword dance of Cinesias
He And next the breath of flutes will float around you
And glorious sunshine such as ours you ll see
And myrtle groves and happy bands who clap
Their hands in triumph men and women too
Di And who are they ?
He The happy mystic bands
Xa And I m the donkey in the mystery show
But I ll not stand it not one instant longer
He Who ll tell you everything you want to know
You ll find them dwelling close beside the road
You are going to travel just at Pluto s gate
And fare thee well my brother
Di And to you
Good cheer (*Exit* HERACLES) Now sirrah pick you up the traps
Xa Before I ve put them down?
Di And quickly too
Xa No prithee no but hire a body one
They re carrying out on purpose for the trip
Di If I can t find one?
Xa Then I ll take them
Di Good
And see! they are carrying out a body now

Here a CORPSE *wrapped in its grave clothes and lying on a bier is carried across the stage*

Hallo! you there you deadman are you willing
To carry down our little traps to Hades?
Corpse What are they ?
Di These
Co Two drachmas for the job?
Di Nay that s too much
Co Out of the pathway you!
Di Beshrew thee stop may be we ll strike a bargain
Co Pay me two drachmas or it s no use talking
Di One and a half
Co I d liefer live again!
Xa How absolute the knave is! He be hanged!
I ll go myself
Di You re the right sort my man
Now to the ferry

Enter CHARON

Charon Yoh up! lay her to
Xa Whatever s that?
Di Why that s the lake by Zeus,
Whereof he spake and yon s the ferry boat
Xa Poseidon yes, and that old fellow s Charon.
Di Charon! O welcome Charon! welcome Charon!

Ch Who s for the Rest from every pain and ill?
Who s for the Lethe s plain? the Donkey shearings?
Who s for Cerberia? Taenarum? or the Ravens?
Di I
Ch Hurry in
Di But where are you going really?
In truth to the Ravens?
Ch Aye for your behoof.
Step in
Di (*to* XANTHIAS) Now lad
Ch A slave? I take no slave,
Unless he has fought for his body rights at sea
Xa I couldn t go I d got the eye-disease
Ch Then fetch a circuit round about the lake
Xa Where must I wait?
Ch Beside the Withering stone
Hard by the Rest
Di You understand?
Xa Too well.
O what ill omen crossed me as I started! *Exit*
Ch (*to* DIONYSUS) Sit to the oar (*calling*) Who else for the boat? Be quick
(*to* DIONYSUS) Hi! what are you doing?
Di What am I doing? Sitting
On to the oar You told me to yourself
Ch Now sit you there you little Potgut
Di So?
Ch Now stretch your arms full length before you
Di So?
Ch Come don t keep fooling plant your feet and now
Pull with a will
Di Why how am *I* to pull?
I m not an oarsman seaman Salaminian
I can t
Ch You can Just dip your oar in once
You ll hear the loveliest timing songs
Di What from?
Ch Frog swans most wonderful
Di Then give the word
Ch Heave ahoy! heave ahoy!
Frogs (*off stage*) Brekekekex ko ax ko ax
Brekekekex ko ax ko ax!
We children of the fountain and the lake
Let us wake
Our full choir shout as the flutes are ringing out
Our symphony of clear voiced song
The song we used to love in the Marshland up above
In praise of Dionysus to produce
Of Nysaean Dionysus son of Zeus
When the revel tipsy throng all crapulous and gay
To our precinct reeled along on the holy Pitcher day
Brekekekex ko ax ko ax
Di O dear! O dear! now I declare
I ve got a bump upon my rump
Fr Brekekekex ko-ax ko-ax
Di But you perchance don t care.
Fr Brekekekex ko-ax ko-ax.

Di. Hang you, and your ko-axing too!
There's nothing but ko-ax with you.
Fr. That is right, Mr Busybody, right!
For the Muses of the lyre love us well,
And hornfoot Pan who plays
on the pipe his jocund lays;
And Apollo, Harper bright,
in our Chorus takes delight
For the strong reed's sake
which I grow within my lake
To be girdled in his lyre's deep shell.
Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
Di. My hands are blistered very sore;
My stern below is sweltering so,
'Twill soon, I know, upturn and roar
Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
O tuneful race, O pray give o'er,
O sing no more.
Fr. Ah, no! ah, no!
Loud and louder our chant must flow.
Sing if ever ye sang of yore,
When in sunny and glorious days
Through the rushes and marsh flags springing
On we swept, in the joy of swimming,
Myriad-diving roundelays.
Or when fleeing the storm we went
Down to the depths, and our choral song
Wildly raised to a loud and long
Bubble-bursting accompaniment.
Fr. and Di. Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
Di. This timing song I take from you.
Fr. That's a dreadful thing to do.
Di. Much more dreadful, if I row
Till I burst myself, I trow.
Fr. and Di. Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
Di. Go, hang yourselves; for what care I?
Fr. All the same we'll shout and cry,
Stretching all our throats with song,
Shouting, crying all day long,
Fr. and Di. Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
Di. In this you'll never, never win.
Fr. This you shall not beat us in.
Di. No, nor ye prevail o'er me.
Never! never! I'll my song
Shout, if need be, all day long,
Until I've learned to master your ko-ax.
Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax.
I thought I'd put a stop to your ko-ax.
Ch. Stop! Easy! Take the oar and push her to.
Now pay your fare and go.
Di. Here's the two obols.
Xanthias! where's Xanthias? Is it Xanthias there?
Xa. (off stage) Hoi, hoi!
Di. Come hither.
Xa. (entering) Glad to meet you, master.
Di. What have you there?
Xa. Nothing but filth and darkness.
Di. But tell me, did you see the parricides
And perjured folk he mentioned?
Xa. Didn't you?
Di. Poseidon, yes. Why look! (pointing to the audience) I see them now.
What's the next step?
Xa. We'd best be moving on.
This is the spot where Heracles declared
Those savage monsters dwell.
Di. O hang the fellow.
That's all his bluff: he thought to scare me off,
The jealous dog, knowing my plucky ways.
There's no such swaggerer lives as Heracles.
Why, I'd like nothing better than to achieve
Some bold adventure, worthy of our trip.
Xa. I know you would. Hallo! I hear a noise.
Di. Where? what?
Xa. Behind us, there.
Di. Get you behind.
Xa. No, it's in front.
Di. Get you in front directly.
Xa. And now I see the most ferocious monster.
Di. O what's it like?
Xa. Like everything by turns.
Now it's a bull: now it's a mule: and now
The loveliest girl.
Di. O where? I'll go and meet her.
Xa. It's ceased to be a girl: it's a dog now.
Di. It is Empusa!
Xa. Well, its face is all
Ablaze with fire.
Di. Has it a copper leg?
Xa. A copper leg? yes, one: and one of cow dung.
Di. O whither shall I flee?
Xa. O whither I?
Di. My priest, protect me, and we'll sup together.
Xa. King Heracles, we're done for.
Di. O forbear,
Good fellow, call me anything but that.
Xa. Well then, Dionysus.
Di. O that's worse again.
Xa. (to the spectre) Aye, go thy way. O master,
here, come here.
Di. O what's up now?
Xa. Take courage; all's serene.
And like Hegelochus, we now may say
"Out of the storm there comes a new fine wether."
Empusa's gone.
Di. Swear it.
Xa. By Zeus she is.
Di. Swear it again.
Xa. By Zeus.
Di. Again.
Xa. By Zeus.
O dear, O dear, how pale I grew to see her,
But he from fright has yellowed me all over.
Di. Ah me, whence fall these evils on my head?
Who is the god to blame for my destruction?
Air, Zeus's chamber, or the Foot of Time?
(A flute is played behind the scenes.)
Hist!
Xa. What's the matter?
Di. Didn't you hear it?
Xa. What?
Di. The breath of flutes.
Xa. Aye, and a whiff of torches
Breathed o'er me too; a very mystic whiff.

Di Then crouch we down and mark what s going on

Chorus (*in the distance*)
O Iacchus! O Iacchus! O Iacchus!

Xa I have it master tis those blessed Mystics
Of whom he told us sporting hereabouts
They sing the Iacchus which Diagoras made

Di I think so too we had better both keep quiet
And so find out exactly what it is

Enter CHORUS *who had chanted the songs of the* FROGS *as initiates*

Chorus

O Iacchus! power excelling
here in stately temples dwelling
O Iacchus! O Iacchus!
Come to tread this verdant level
Come to dance in mystic revel
Come whilst round thy forehead hurtles
Many a wreath of fruitful myrtles
Come with wild and saucy paces
Mingling in our joyous dance
Pure and holy which embraces
all the charms of all the Graces
When the mystic choirs advance

Xa Holy and sacred queen Demeter s daughter
O what a jolly whiff of pork breathed o er me!

Di Hist! and perchance you ll get some tripe yourself

Chorus

Come arise from sleep awaking
come the fiery torches shaking
O Iacchus! O Iacchus!
Morning Star that shinest nightly
Lo the mead is blazing brightly
Age forgets its years and sadness
Aged knees curvet for gladness
Lift thy flashing torches o er us
Marshal all thy blameless train
Lead O lead the way before us
lead the lovely youthful Chorus
To the marshy flowery plain

All evil thoughts and profane be still
far hence far hence from our choirs depart
Who knows not well what the Mystics tell
or is not holy and pure of heart
Who ne er has the noble revelry learned
or danced the dance of the Muses high
Or shared in the Bacchic rites which old
bull eating Cratinus s words supply
Who vulgar coarse buffoonery loves
though all untimely the jests they make
Or lives not easy and kind with all
or kindling faction forbears to slake
But fans the fire from a base desire
some pitiful gain for himself to reap
Or takes in office his gifts and bribes
while the city is tossed on the stormy deep
Who fort or fleet to the foe betrays
or a vile Thorycion ships away
Forbidden stores from Aegina s shores
to Epidaurus across the Bay
Transmitting oar pads and sails and tar
that cu st collector of five per cents
The knave who tries to procure supplies
for the use of the enemy s armaments
The Cyclian singer who dares befoul
the Lady Hecate s wayside shrine
The public speaker who once lampooned
in our Bacchic feasts would with heart malign
Keep nibbling away the Comedians pay —
to these I utter my warning cry
I charge them once I charge them twice
I charge them thrice that they draw not nigh
To the sacred dance of the Mystic choir
But ye my comrades awake the song
The night long revels of joy and mirth
which ever of right to our feast belong

Advance true hearts advance!
On to the gladsome bowers
On to the sward with flowers
Embosomed bright!
March on with jest and jeer and dance
Full well ye ve supped to night

March chanting loud your lays
Your hearts and voices raising
The Saviour goddess praising
Who vows she ll still
Our city save to endless days
Whate er Thorycion s will

Break off the measure and change the time
and now with chanting and hymns adorn
Demeter goddess mighty and high
the harvest queen the giver of corn

O Lady over our rites presiding
Preserve and succour thy choral throng
And grant us all in thy help confiding
To dance and revel the whole day long
AND MUCH in earnest and much in jest
Worthy thy feast may we speak therein
And when we have bantered and laughed our best
The victor s wreath be it ours to win

Call we now the youthful god
call him hither without delay
Him who travels amongst his chorus
dancing along on the Sacred Way

O come with the joy of thy festival song
O come to the goddess O mix with our throng
Untired though the journey be never so long
O Lord of the frolic and dance
Iacchus beside me advance!
For fun and for cheapness our dress thou hast rent
Through thee we may dance to the top of our bent

Revila and jeeris and none will resent
O Lord of the frolic and dance
Iacchus, beside me a l ance!
A sweet pretty girl I observed in the show
Her robe had been torn in the scuffle and lo,
There peeped through the tatters a bosom of snow
O Lord of the frolic and d nce,
Iacchus, beside me advance!

Di. Wouldn t I like to follow on and try
A f sport and dancing?
Xa. Wouldn t I?
Ch. Shall we all a merry j ke
At Archedemus poke
Who has not cut his guild men yet though se en years old
Yet up among the dead
He is demagogue and head
And contri es the t pmost place f the rascaldom to hold?
And Clisthenes, th say
Is amon th tombs all day
Bewailin for hi lo r w th a lamentable whine
And Calia I m i ld
Has become a sailor bold
And cast li n hide o er his members feminine
Di. Can a y of you tell
Where Pluto here may dw ll
For we, sirs, are two stra ers who were never here before?
Ch. O then n further stray
Nor a a inquire th way
For know that ye ha e journe ed to his very entrance-door
Di. T ke p th wraps, m lad
Xa Now is not thi too bad?
Lu "Zeus Corinth" b the wraps" keeps saying o er and o er

Ch rus

Now wheel your sac ed dances through the glad with flowers bed ht,
A y who are partak rs of the holy fest l rite
And I wil ith the om n and the holy ma den go
Wher they keep th n ghtly vigil an a picious light to show

Now haste we to th roses,
And th meadows full of posies,
Now haste we to the meadows
I ou own old way
I oral dances blend ng
In da ces never end
Which only for the holy
The Dest n es rray

O happy myst chorus,
The blessed sunshine o er us
On ga on is smi ng
In ts soft sweet l ht
On us ho strove forever
With holy pure endea our
Alike by friend and stranger
To guide our steps aright

D What s the right way to knock? I wonder how
The nati es h re are wont to knock at doors.
Xa No dawdl ng taste the door You e got re member
The lion hide and pride of Heracles
Di (*knocking*) Bo ! bo !

The door opens AEACUS *appears*

Aeacus Who s there?
Di I Heracles the strong!
Ae O you most shameless desperate ruffian you!
O villa n illain arrant lest villain!
Who seized our Ce berus by the throat and fled
And ran, and rushed and bolted haling off
The dog my charge! But now I e got thee fast
So close the Styx s inky hearted rock
The blood bedabbled peak f Acheron
Shall hem thee n the hell hounds of Cocytus
Prowl round thee wh lst the hundred headed Asp
Shall ri e thy heart strings the Tartesian Lamprey
Pr y on thy lu gs and those Tithrasian Gorgons
Man le and tear thy k d eys, mauling them
Entrails and all into one bloody mash
I'll speed a running foot to fetch them hither

Exit AEACUS.

Xa Hallo! what now?
Di I e done it call the god
Xa Get up, you lau hin stock get up directly
Before you re seen
Di What *I* get up? I m fainting
Please dab a sponge of water *on my heart*
Xa Here! Dab it on
Di Where is t?
Xa Ye golden gods,
Lies your heart *there*?
Di It got so terrified
It flutte ed down into my st mach s pit
Xa Cowardliest of gods and men!
Di The cowardliest? I?
What I who s ed you for a spo ge thi g
A coward never would ha e done!
Xa What then?
Di A cowa d would ha e la n there wallowing
But I tood up and wiped m self withal.
Xa Pose d n! quite h ro c
D Deed I think so.
But wer n t yo frightened at those dreadful th eats
And shouti gs?
X Frighte ed? Not a b t I ca ed not.
D Come the if you re so *ery* bra a man.
Will you be I and take th hero s cl b
And lion kin, sin you re so m nstrous plucky?
And I ll be now the slave and bear the luggag
X Hand them cross. I ca not choose but take them.
And now obser the Xa thio-her cles
If I m coward and a sneak like you.
D N w you re the rogue fr m Melite *s own* self.
And I ll pick up and carry on the traps.

Di Then crouch we down and mark what s going on

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Of whom he told us sporting hereabouts
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though all untimely the jests they make
Or lives not easy and kind with all
or kindling faction forbears to slake
But fans the fire from a base desire
some pitiful gain for himself to reap
Or takes in office his gifts and bribes
while the city is tossed on the stormy deep
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The Cyclian singer who dares befoul
the Lady Hecate s wayside shrine
The public speaker who once lampooned
in our Bacchic feasts would with heart malign
Keep nibbling away the Comedians pay —
to these I utter my warning cry
I charge them once I charge them twice
I charge them thrice that they draw not nigh
To the sacred dance of the Mystic choir
But *ye* my comrades awake the song
The night long revels of joy and mirth
which ever of right to our feast belong

Advance true hearts advance!
On to the gladsome bowers
On to the sward with flowers
Embosomed bright!
March on with jest and jeer and dance
Full well ye ve supped to night

March chanting loud your lays
Your hearts and voices raising
The Saviour goddess praising
Who vows she ll still
Our city save to endless days
Whate er Thorycion s will

Break off the measure and change the time
and now with chanting *and hymns adorn*
Demeter goddess mighty and high
the harvest queen the giver of corn

O Lady over our rites presiding
Preserve and succour thy choral throng
And grant us all in thy help confiding
To dance and revel the whole day long
AND MUCH in earnest and much in jest
Worthy thy feast may we speak therein
And when we have bantered and laughed our best
The victor s wreath be it ours to win

Call we now the youthful god
call him hither without delay
Him who travels amongst his chorus
dancing along on the Sacred Way

O come with the joy of thy festival song
O come to the goddess O mix with our throng
Untired though the journey be never so long
O Lord of the frolic and dance
Iacchus beside me advance!
For fun and for cheapness our dress thou hast rent
Through thee we may dance to the top of our bent

Ch. Now that at last you appear once more
Wearing the garb that at first you wore
Wielding the club and the tawny skin
Now it is yours to be up and doing
Glarin like mad and your youth renewing
Mindful of him whose gu e you are in
If hen caught in a bit of a scrape you
Sr a word of alarm to escape you
Shown yourself but a feckless kna e
Then will your master at o ce u drape you
Then you ll ain be the toiling sla e.

Xa. There I admit you ha e gi en to me a
Capital hi t and the like idea
Friends, had occurred to myself before
T il if anything good befell
H would be wanting I know full well
Wantin t take to the togs once more.
N vertheless, while in these I m ested
Ne er shall you find me craven-crested
No, for dittany look I ll wear
A and methinks it will soo be tested
Hark! how the portals are rustlin there

Re-enter AE CUS *with assistants*

Ae Seize the dog stealer bind him pinion him
Dr him to justice!

Di. Somebody s go to catch it

Xa. (*striking out*) Hands off! get away! stand back!

Ae Eh? You e for fi hting
H ! Dit las, Sceblyas, and Pardocas,
Come hith quick fight m thi sturdy kna e

Di. Now isn t it a shame the man should trike
And he a thief besides?

Ae A monstrous sham !

Di. A regular burning sham !

Xa By the Lord Zeus.
If ever I was here before if e
I stole one ha r s-worth from you let me d !
And ow I'll make you a right nobl offer
Arrest m lad t rture him as will,
And if you find I m guilty take a d kill me

Ae Torture him how?

Xa. I ny mode you please
Pil bricks upon him st ff his ose w th acid
Flay rack him, hoi t him flog him with a scourge
Of pri kl b tles only t with this,
A soft lea ed nion, or a tend leek

Ae A fai proposal If I strike too hard
And maim the boy I ll mak you compe sation

Xa I shan t equi e t Take him out nd fl g him.

Ae but I ll d t he e before your eyes.
Now then p t d wn the traps, and mind you speak
The truth, young f llow

Di. (gony) M n! don t torture m !
I am god You'll blam yourself hereafter
I ou touch me

Ae Hill ! What s that you are sayin ?

Di I a I m Ba chus, son of Zeus, a god
And *he* the sla e.

Ae You hear him?

Xa. Hear him? Yes.
All the more reason you hould flog him w ll.
For if he is a god he won t perceive it.

D Well but you say that you re a god yourself
So why not *you* be flogged as well as I?

Xa A fair proposal. And be this the test
Whichever of u to you fi st behold
Flinchi g or crying out—he s not the god

Ae Upon my rd you re quite the gentleman,
You re all for right and justice Strip then both.

Xa H can you test us fairly?

Ae Easily
I ll gi e you blo v for blow

Xa A good idea
We re ready! Now! (AEACUS *strikes him*) see if you
catch me flinching

Ae I stru k you

Xa (*incredulously*) No!

Ae Well it seems no deed
Now then I ll strike the other (*Strikes* DIONY)

Di Tell me hen?

Ae I struck you.

Di Struck me? Then why didn t I sneeze?

Ae Don t know I m sure I ll try the other aga n

X A d qu ckly too. Good gracious!

Ae Why good gracious"?
Not hurt you d d I?

Xa No, I merely thought of
The Diomeian feast of Heracles

Ae A holy man! 'Tis now the other s turn

D H ! Hi!

Ae Hallo!

Di Look at those horsemen look!

Ae But why these tears?

Di There s such a mell of on ons.

A Then you don t mind it?

Di (*cheerfully*) Mind t? Not a b t.

Ae Well I mu t go to the other one again

Xa O! O!

A Hallo!

Xa Do pray pull out this thorn

Ae What does it mean? 'Tis this one s tu n again

Di (*shrieking*) Apollo! Lord! (*calmly*) of Delos
and of Pytho.

Xa He flinched! You heard him?

D Not at all a jolly
Verse of H pponax flashed across my mind

X You don t half do t cut hi flanks to p eces.

Ae By Zeus, well thought on Turn ur belly
here

D (*screaming*) Poseidon!

X The e! he s fli hing

Di (*singing*) who dost reign
Am ngst the A ean peak and c eeks
And o r the deep bl e mai

A No, b Demeter st ll I can t find out
Which s th god but come ye both indoors
M lo d himself and Persephassa the
Bei g god th msel es, will soon find out the truth

Di Right! ri ht! I onl w h you had tl ought of
that
Before you gave me those trem ndous wha ks.

Exeunt DI Y US XANTHIAS AEACUS, *and at
tendants*

Enter a MAID SERVANT *of Persephone from door*
Maid O welcome Heracles! come in sweetheart
My Lady when they told her set to work
Baked mighty loaves boiled two or three tureens
Of lentil soup roasted a prime ox whole
Made rolls and honey-cakes So come along
Xa (*declining*) You are too kind
Ma I will not let you go
I will not *let* you! Why she s stewing slices
Of juicy bird s flesh and she s making comfits
And tempering down her richest wine Come dear
Come along in
Xa (*still declining*) Pray thank her
Ma O you re jesting
I shall not let you off there s such a lovely
Flute girl all ready and we ve two or three
Dancing girls also
Xa Eh! what! Dancing girls?
Ma Young budding virgins freshly tired and trimmed
Come dear come in The cook was dishing up
The cutlets and they are bringing in the tables
Xa *Then go you in and tell those dancing girls*
Of whom you spake I m coming in Myself
Exit MAID
Pick up the traps my lad and follow me
Di Hi! stop! you re not in earnest just because
I dressed you up in fun as Heracles?
Come don t keep fooling Xanthias but lift
And carry in the traps yourself
Xa Why! what!
You are never going to strip me of these togs
You gave me!
Di Going to? No I m doing it now
Off with that lion skin
Xa Bear witness all
The gods shall judge between us
Di Gods indeed!
Why how could *you* (*the vain and foolish thought!*)
A slave a mortal act Alcmena s son?
Xa All right then take them maybe if God will
You ll soon require my services again
Cho This is the part of a dexterous clever
Man with his wits about him ever
One who has travelled the world to see
Always to shift and to keep through all
Close to the sunny side of the wall
Not like a pictured block to be
Standing always in one position
Nay but to veer with expedition
And ever to catch the favouring breeze
This is the part of a shrewd tactician
This is to be a—*Theramenes!*
Di Truly an exquisite joke twould be
Him with a dancing girl to see
Lolling at ease on Milesian rugs
Me like a slave beside him standing
Aught that he wants to his lordship handing
Then as the damsel fair he hugs
Seeing me all on fire to embrace her
He would perchance (*for there s no* man baser)
Turning him round like a lazy lout
Straight on my mouth deliver a facer
Knocking my ivory choirmen out
Enter HOSTESS *and* PLATHANE
Hostess O Plathane! Plathane! Here s that naughty man
That s he who got into our tavern once
And ate up sixteen loaves
Plathane O so he is!
The very man
Xa Bad luck for somebody!
Ho O and besides those twenty bits of stew
Half obol pieces
Xa Somebody s going to catch it!
Ho That garlic too
Di Woman you re talking nonsense
You don t know what you re saying
Ho O you thought
I shouldn t know you with your buskins on!
Ah and I ve not yet mentioned all that fish
No nor the new made cheese he gulped it down
Baskets and all unlucky that we were
And when I just alluded to the price
He looked so fierce and bellowed like a bull
Xa Yes that s his way that s what he always does.
Ho O and he drew his sword and seemed quite mad
Pla O that he did
Ho And terrified us so
We sprang up to the cockloft she and I
Then out he hurled decamping with the rugs
Xa That s his way too but something must be done
Ho Quick run and call my patron Cleon here!
Pla O if you meet him call Hyperbolus!
We ll pay you out to-day
Ho O filthy throat
O how I d like to take a stone and hack
Those grinders out with which you chawed my wares
Pla I d like to pitch you in the deadman s pit
Ho I d like to get a reaping hook and scoop
That gullet out with which you gorged my tripe
But I ll to Cleon he ll soon serve his writs
He ll twist it out of you to-day he will
Exeunt HOSTESS *and* PLATHANE
Di Perdition seize me if I don t love Xanthias
Xa Aye aye I know your drift stop stop that talking
I won t be Heracles
Di O don t say so
Dear darling Xanthias
Xa Why how can I
A slave a mortal act Alcmena s son!
Di Aye aye I know you are vexed and I deserve it
And if you pummel me I won t complain
But if I strip you of these togs again
Perdition seize myself my wife my children
And most of all that blear eyed Archedemus
Xa That oath contents me on those terms I take them

[illegible]

[illegible]

Xa. [illegible]

Ae. [illegible]

Xa. How about [illegible]

Xa. Great King [illegible] Zeus! And [illegible]

Ae. [illegible]

Xa. [illegible]

O heaven and earth!

Xa. Phoebus Apollo [illegible]

Ko and be [illegible]

[illegible] by Zeus, our [illegible] own [illegible]

Wh[illegible] What means this

And now?

Ae. That's Aeschylus and Euripides.

Xa. Eh?

Ae. Wonderful, wonderful things are going on.

The dead are rioting, taking different sides.

Xa. Wh[illegible] the matter?

Ae. There's a custom here

With all the crafts, the good and noble crafts,

That the chief master of his art in each

Shall ha[illegible] his dinner in the assembly hall,

And sit by Pluto's side.

Xa. I understand.

Ae. Until another comes, more wise than he

In the same art: then must the first give way.

Xa. And how has this disturbed our Aeschylus?

Ae. 'Twas he that occupied the tragic chair,

As, in his craft, the noblest.

Xa. Who does now?

Ae. But when Euripides came down, he kept

Flourishing off before the highwaymen,

Thieves, burglars, parricides—these form our mob

In Hades—till with listening to his twists

And turns, and pleas and counterpleas, they went

Mad on the man, and hailed him first and wisest:

Elate with this, he claimed the tragic chair

Where Aeschylus was seated.

Xa. Wasn't he pelted?

Ae. Not he: the populace clamoured out to try

Which of the twain was wiser in his art.

Xa. You mean the rascals?

Ae. Aye, as high as heaven!

Xa. But were there none to side with Aeschylus?

Ae. Scant and sparse the good, (*regards the Audience*) the same as here.

Xa. And what does Pluto now propose to do?

Ae. He means to hold a tournament, and bring

Their tragedies to the proof.

Xa. But Sophocles,

How came not he to claim the tragic chair?

Ae. Claim it? Not he! When he came down, he kissed

With reverence Aeschylus, and clasped his hand,

And yielded willingly the chair to him.

But now he's going, says Cleidemides,

To sit third-man: and then if Aeschylus win,

He'll stay content: if not, for his art's sake,

He'll fight to the death against Euripides.

Xa. Will it come off?

Ae. O yes, by Zeus, directly.

And then, I hear, will wonderful things be done,

The art poetic will be weighed in scales.

Xa. What! weigh out tragedy like butcher's meat?

Ae. Levels they'll bring, and measuring-tapes for words,

And moulded oblongs,

Xa. Is it bricks they are making?

Ae. Wedges and compasses: for Euripides

Vows that he'll test the dramas, word by word.

Xa. Aeschylus chafes at this, I fancy.

Ae. Well,

He lowered his brows, upglaring like a bull.

Xa. And who's to be the judge?

Ae. There came the rub.

Skilled men were hard to find: for with the Athenians

Aeschylus, somehow, did not hit it off.

Xa. Too many burglars, I expect, he thought.

Ae. And all the rest, he said, were trash and nonsense

To judge poetic wits. So then at last

They chose your lord, an expert in the art.

But we go in: for when our lords are bent

On urgent business, that means blows for us.

Ch. O surely with terrible wrath

will the thunder-voiced monarch be filled,

When he sees his opponent beside him,

the tonguester, the artifice-skilled,

Stand, whetting his tusks for the fight!

O surely, his eyes rolling fell

Will with terrible madness be fraught!

O then will be charging of plume-waving words

with their wild-floating mane

And then will be whirling of splinters,

and phrases smoothed down with the plane,

When the man would the grand-stepping maxims,

the language gigantic, repel

Of the hero-creator of thought.

There will his shaggy born crest

upbristle for anger and woe,

Horribly frowning and growling,

his fury will launch at the foe

Huge-clamped masses of words,

with exertion Titanic up-tearing

Great ship-timber planks for the fray.

But here will the tongue be at work,

uncoiling, word-testing, refining,

Sophist-creator of phrases,

dissecting, detracting, maligning

Chorus

Come Muse to our Mystical Chorus
O come to the joy of my song
O see on the benches before us
that countless and wonderful throng
Where wits by the thousand abide
with more than a Cleophon s pride—
On the lips of that foreigner base
of Athens the bane and disgrace
There is shrieking his kinsman by race
The garrulous swallow of Thrace
From that perch of exotic descent
Rejoicing her sorrow to vent
She pours to her spirit s content
a nightingale s woful lament
That e en though the voting be equal
his ruin will soon be the sequel

Well it suits the holy Chorus
evermore with counsel wise
To exhort and teach the city
this we therefore now advise—
End the townsmen s apprehensions
equalize the rights of all
If by Phrynichus s wrestlings
some perchance sustained a fall
Yet to these tis surely open
having put away their sin
For their slips and vacillations
pardon at your hands to win
Give your brethren back their franchise
Sin and shame it were that slaves
Who have once with stern devotion
fought your battle on the waves
Should be straightway lords and masters
yea Plataeans fully blown—
Not that this deserves our censure
there I praise you there alone
Has the city in her anguish
policy and wisdom shown—
Nay but these of old accustomed
on our ships to fight and win
(They their fathers too before them)
these our very kith and kin
You should likewise when they ask you
pardon for their single sin
O by nature best and wisest
O relax your jealous ire
Let us all the world as kinsfolk
and as citizens acquire
All who on our ships will battle
well and bravely by our side
If we cocker up our city
narrowing her with senseless pride
Now when she is rocked and reeling
in the cradles of the sea
Here again will after ages deem we acted brainlessly

And O if I m able to scan
the habits and life of a man
Who shall rue his iniquities soon!
not long shall that little baboon
That Cleigenes shifty and small
the wickedest bathman of all
Who are lords of the earth—which is brought
from the isle of Cimolus and wrought
With nitre and lye into soap—
Not long shall he vex us I hope
And this the unlucky one knows
Yet ventures a peace to oppose
And being addicted to blows
he carries a stick as he goes,
Lest while he is tipsy and reeling
some robber his cloak should be stealin

Often has it crossed my fancy
that the city loves to deal
With the very best and noblest
members of her commonweal
Just as with our ancient coinage
and the newly minted gold
Yea for these our sterling pieces,
all of pure Athenian mould
All of perfect die and metal
all the fairest of the fair
All of workmanship unequalled
proved and valued everywhere
Both amongst our own Hellenes
and Barbarians far away
These we use not but the worthless
pinchbeck coins of yesterday
Vilest die and basest metal
now we always use instead
Even so our sterling townsmen
nobly born and nobly bred
Men of worth and rank and mettle
men of honourable fame
Trained in every liberal science
choral dance and manly game
These we treat with scorn and insult
but the strangers newliest come
Worthless sons of worthless fathers
pinchbeck townsmen yellowy scum
Whom in earlier days the city
hardly would have stooped to use
Even for her scapegoat victims
these for every task we choose
O unwise and foolish people
yet to mend your ways begin
Use again the good and useful
so hereafter if ye win
Twill be due to this your wisdom
if ye fall at least twill be
Not a fall that brings dishonour
falling from a worthy tree

Enter AEACUS XANTHIAS *and two attendants*

Ae By Zeus the Saviour quite the gentleman
Your master is
Xa Gentleman? I believe you
He s all for wine and women is my master
Ae But not to have flogged you when the truth came out
That you the slave were passing off as master!
Xa He d get the worst of that

Of her continuous lyric odes
the mourner never stirred
Di. I liked it too, I sometimes think
that I those mutes preferred
To all your chatterers now a-days.
Eu. Because, if you must know
You were an ass.
Di. An ass, no doubt
what made him do it though?
Eu. That was his quackery don't you see
to set the audience guessing
When Niobe would speak meanwhile,
the drama was progressing
Di. The rascal, how he took me in!
'Twas shameful, was it not?
(To AESCHYLUS) What makes you stamp and fidget so?
Eu. He's catching it so hot
So when he had humbugged thus awhile
and now his wretched play
Was halfway through, a dozen words,
great wild bull words, he'd say
Fierce Bugaboos, with bristling crests,
and shaggy eyebrows too,
Which not a soul could understand
Ae. O heavens!
Di. Be quiet, do.
Eu. But not one single word was clear
Di. St! don't your teeth be gnashing
Eu. 'Twas all Scamanders, moated camps,
and griffin-eagles flashing
In burnished copper on the shields,
... precipice high
Expressions, hard to comprehend
Di. Aye, by the Powers, and I
Full many a sleepless night have spent
in anxious thought because
I'd find the tawny cock horse out
what sort of bird it was!
Ae. It was a sign, you stupid dolt
engraved on the ships upon
Eryxis I supposed it was,
Philoxenus's son.
Now really should a cock be brought
into a tragic play?
Ae. You enemy of gods and men,
what was your practice, pray?
Eu. No cock horse in my plays, by Zeus,
no goat-stag there you'll see
Such figures as are blazoned forth
in Median tapestry
When first I took the art from you,
bloated and swoln, poor thing
With turgid gasconading words
and heavy dieting
First I reduced and toned her down,
and made her slim and neat
With wordlets and with exercise
and poultices of beet
And next a dose of chatterjuice
distilled from books, I gave her
And monodies she took, with sharp
Cephisophon for flavour

I never used haphazard words,
or plunged abruptly in
Who entered first explained at large
the drama's origin
And source
Ae. Its source I really trust
was better than your own
Eu. Then from the very opening lines
no idleness was shown
The mistress talked with all her might
the servant talked as much
The master talked the maiden talked
the beldame talked
Ae. For such
An outrage was not death your due?
Eu. No, by Apollo, no
That was my democratic way
Di. Ah, let that topic go
Your record is not there my friend
particularly good
Eu. Then next I taught all these to speak.
Ae. You did so, and I would
That ere such mischief you had wrought
your very lungs had split
Eu. Canons of verse I introduced,
and neatly chiselled wit
To look, to scan, to plot, to plan
to twist, to turn, to woo
On all to spy, in all to pry
Ae. You did I say so too
Eu. I showed them scenes of common life,
the things we know and see
Where any blunder would at once
by all detected be
I never blustered on or took
their breath and wits away
By Cycnuses or Memnons clad
in terrible array
With bells upon their horses' heads,
the audience to dismay
Look at his pupils, look at mine
and there the contrast view
Uncouth Megaenetus is his,
and rough Phormisius too
Great long-beard-lance-and-trumpet men
flesh-tearers with the pine
But natty smart Theramenes,
and Cleitophon are mine
Di. Theramenes a clever man
and wonderfully sly
Immerse him in a flood of ills,
he'll soon be high and dry
A Kian with a kappa, sir
not Chian with a chi
Eu. I taught them all these knowing ways
By chopping logic in my plays,
And making all my speakers try
To reason out the How and Why
So now the people trace the springs,
The sources and the roots of things,
And manage all their households too
Far better than they used to do,

Shaking the envious bits
and with subtle analysis paring
The lung's large labour away
Here apparently there is a complete change of scene to the Hall of Pluto with PLUTO *himself sitting on his throne and* DIONYSUS AESCHYLUS *and* EURIPIDES *in the foreground*
Euripides Don t talk to me I won t give up the chair
I say I am better in the art than he
Di You hear him Aeschylus why don t you speak?
Eu He ll do the grand at first the juggling trick
He used to play in all his tragedies
Di Come my fine fellow pray don t talk too big
Eu I know the man I ve scanned him through and through
A savage creating stubborn pulling fellow
Uncurbed unfettered uncontrolled of speech
Unperiphrastic bombastiloquent
Aeschylus Hah! sayest thou so child of the garden quean!
And this to *me* thou chattery babble collector
Thou pauper creating rags and patches stitcher?
Thou shalt abye it dearly!
Di Pray be still
Nor heat thy soul to fury Aeschylus
Aes Not till I ve made you see the sort of man
This cripple maker is who crows so loudly
Di Bring out a ewe a black fleeced ewe, my boys
Here s a typhoon about to burst upon us
Aes Thou picker up of Cretan monodies
Foisting thy tales of incest on the stage—
Di Forbear forbear most honoured Aeschylus
And you my poor Euripides begone
If you are wise out of this pitiless hail
Lest with some heady word he crack your scull
And batter out your brain—less Telephus
And not with passion Aeschylus but calmly
Test and be tested Tis not meet for poets
To scold each other like two baking girls
But you go roaring like an oak on fire
Eu I m ready I'll I don t draw back one bit
I ll lash or if he will let him lash first
The talk the lays the sinews of a play
Aye and my Peleus aye and Aeolus
And Meleager aye and Telephus
Di And what do you propose? Speak Aeschylus
Aes I could have wished to meet him otherwhere
We fight not here on equal terms
Di Why not?
Aes My poetry survived me his died with him
He s got it here all handy to recite
Howbeit if so you wish it so we ll have it
Di O bring me fire and bring me frankincense
I ll pray or e er the clash of wits begin
To judge the strife with high poetic skill
Meanwhile (*to the* CHORUS) invoke the Muses with a song

Chorus
O Muses the daughters divine
of *Zeus*, the immaculate Nin
Who gaze from your mansions serene
on intellects subtle and keen
When down to the tournament lists,
in bright polished wit they descend
With wrestling and turnings and twists
in the battle of words to contend
O come and behold what the two
antagonist poets can do
Whose mouths are the swiftest to teach
grand language and filings of speech
For now of their wits is the sternest
encounter commencing in earnest
Di Ye two put up your prayers before ye start
Aes Demeter mistress nourisher of my soul
O make me worthy of thy mystic rites!
Di (*to* EURIPIDES) Now put on incense you
Eu Excuse me no
My vows are paid to other gods than these
Di What a new coinage of your own?
Eu Precisely
Di Pray then to them those private gods of yours
Eu Ether my pasture volubly rolling ton ue
Intelligent wit and critic nostrils keen
O well and neatly may I trounce his plays!
Cho We also are yearning from these to be learning
Some stately measure some majestic grand
Movement telling of conflicts nigh
Now for battle arrayed they stand
Tongues embittered and anger high
Each has got a venturesome will
Each an eager and nimble mind
One will wield with artistic skill
Clearcut phrases and wit refined
Then the other with words defiant
Stern and strong like an angry giant
Laying on with uprooted trees
Soon will scatter a world of these
Superscholastic subtleties
Di Now then commence your arguments,
and mind you both display
True wit not metaphors nor things
which any fool could say
Eu As for myself good people all
I ll tell you by and by
My own poetic worth and claims
but first of all I ll try
To show how this portentous quack
beguiled the silly fool
Whose tastes were nurtured ere he came
in Phrynichus s school.
He d bring some single mourner on
seated and veiled twould be
Achilles say or Niobe
—the face you could not see—
An empty show of tragic woe
who uttered not one thin
Di Tis true
Eu Then in the Chorus came
and rattled off a string

Of four continuous lyric odes
the mourner never stirred
Di. I liked it too. I sometimes think
that I those mutes preferred
To all your chatterers now a-days.
Eu. Because, if you must know,
You were an ass.
Di. An ass, no doubt;
what made him do it though?
Eu. That was his quackery, don't you see,
to set the audience guessing
When Niobe would speak; meanwhile
the drama was progressing.
Di. The rascal, how he took me in!
'Twas shameful, was it not?
(To Aeschylus) What makes you stamp and fidget so?
Eu. He's catching it so hot.
So when he had humbugged thus awhile,
and now his wretched play
Was halfway through, a dozen words,
great wild bull words, he'd say,
Fierce Bugaboos, with bristling crests,
and shaggy eyebrows too,
Which not a soul could understand.
Ae. O heavens!
Di. Be quiet, do.
Eu. But not one single word was clear.
Di. St! don't your teeth be gnashing.
Eu. 'Twas all Scamanders, moated camps,
and griffin-eagles flashing
In burnished copper on the shields,
his lyric precipice high,
Erysipons, hard to comprehend.
Di. Aye, by the Powers, and I
Full many a sleepless night have spent
in anxious thought, because
I'd find the tawny cock-horse out,
what sort of bird it was!
Ae. It was a sign, you stupid dolt,
engraved the ships upon.
Di. Eryxis I supposed it was,
Philoxenus's son.
Eu. Now really should a cock be brought
into a tragic play?
Ae. You enemy of gods and men,
what was *your* practice, pray?
Eu. No cock-horse in *my* plays, by Zeus,
goat-stag there you'll see,
Such figures as are blazoned forth
in Median tapestry.
When first I took the art from you,
bloated and swoln, poor thing,
With turgid gasconading words
and heavy dieting,
First I reduced and toned her down,
and made her slim and neat
With wordlets and with exercise
and poultices of beet,
And next a dose of chatterjuice,
distilled from books, I gave her,
And monodies she took, with sharp
Cephisophon for flavour.
I never used haphazard words,
or plunged abruptly in;
Who entered first explained at large
the drama's origin
And source.
Ae. Its source, I really trust,
was better than your own.
Eu. Then from the very opening lines
no idleness was shown;
The mistress talked with all her might,
the servant talked as much,
The master talked, the maiden talked,
the beldame talked.
Ae. For such
An outrage was not death your due?
Eu. No, by Apollo, no:
That was my democratic way.
Di. Ah, let that topic go.
Your record is not there, my friend,
particularly good.
Eu. Then next I taught all these to speak.
Ae. You did so, and I would
That ere such mischief you had wrought,
your very lungs had split.
Eu. Canons of verse I introduced,
and neatly chiselled wit;
To look, to scan: to plot, to plan:
to twist, to turn, to woo:
On all to spy; in all to pry.
Ae. You did: I say so too.
Eu. I showed them scenes of *common life*,
the things we know and see,
Where any blunder would at once
by all detected be.
I never blustered on, or took
their breath and wits away
By Cycnuses or Memnons clad
in terrible array,
With bells upon their horses' heads,
the audience to dismay.
Look at *his* pupils, look at *mine*:
and there the contrast view.
Uncouth Megaenetus is his,
and rough Phormisius too;
Great long-beard-lance-and-trumpet-men,
flesh-tearers with the pine:
But natty smart Theramenes,
and Cleitophon are mine.
Di. Theramenes? a clever man
and wonderfully sly:
Immerse him in a flood of ills,
he'll soon be high and dry,
A Kian with a kappa, sir,
not Chian with a chi.
Eu. I taught them all these knowing ways
By chopping logic in my plays,
And making all my speakers try
To reason out the How and Why.
So now the people trace the springs,
The sources and the roots of things,
And manage all their households too
Far better than they used to do,

Shaking the envious bits
and with subtle analysis paring
The lung s large labour away

Here apparently there is a complete change of scene to the Hall of Pluto with PLUTO *himself sitting on his throne and* DIONYSUS AESCHYLUS *and* EURIPIDES *in the foreground*

Euripides Don t talk to me I won t give up the chair
I say I am better in the art than he

Di You hear him Aeschylus why don t you speak?

Eu He ll do the grand at first the juggling trick
He used to play in all his tragedies

Di Come my fine fellow pray don t talk too big

Eu I know the man I ve scanned him through and through
A savage creating stubborn pulling fellow
Uncurbed unfettered uncontrolled of speech
Unperiphrastic bombastiloquent

Aeschylus Hah! sayest thou so child of the garden quean!
And this to *me* thou chattery babble collector
Thou pauper creating rags and patches stitcher?
Thou shalt abye it dearly!

Di Pray be still
Nor heat thy soul to fury Aeschylus

Aes Not till I ve made you see the sort of man
This cripple maker is who crows so loudly

Di Bring out a ewe a black fleeced ewe my boys
Here s a typhoon about to burst upon us

Aes Thou picker up of Cretan monodies
Foisting thy tales of incest on the stage—

Di Forbear forbear most honoured Aeschylus
And you my poor Euripides begone
If you are wise out of this pitiless hail
Lest with some heady word he crack your scull
And batter out your brain—less Telephus
And not with passion Aeschylus but calmly
Test and be tested Tis not meet for poets
To scold each other like two baking girls
But you go roaring like an oak on fire

Eu I m ready I! I don t draw back one bit
I ll lash or if he will let him lash first
The talk the lays the sinews of a play
Aye and my Peleus aye and Aeolus
And Meleager aye and Telephus

Di And what do *you* propose? Speak Aeschylus

Aes I could have wished to meet him otherwhere
We fight not here on equal terms

Di Why not?

Aes My poetry survived me his died with him
He s got it here all handy to recite
Howbeit if so you wish it so we ll have it

Di O bring me fire and bring me frankincense
I ll pray or e er the clash of wits begin
To judge the strife with high poetic skill
Meanwhile (*to the* CHORUS) invoke the Muses with a song

Chorus

O Muses, the daughters divine
of Zeus the immaculate Nine
Who gaze from your mansions serene
on intellects subtle and keen
When down to the tournament lists
in bright polished wit they descend
With wrestling and turnings and twists
in the battle of words to contend
O come and behold what the two
antagonist poets can do
Whose mouths are the swiftest to teach
grand language and filings of speech
For now of their wits is the sternest
encounter commencing in earnest

Di Ye two put up your prayers before ye start

Aes Demeter mistress nourisher of my soul
O make me worthy of thy mystic rites!

Di (*to* EURIPIDES) Now put on incense you

Eu Excuse me no
My vows are paid to other gods than these

Di What a new coinage of your own?

Eu Precisely

Di Pray then to them those private gods of yours.

Eu Ether my pasture volubly rolling tongue
Intelligent wit and critic nostrils keen
O well and neatly may I trounce his plays!

Cho We also are yearning from these to be learning
Some stately measure some majestic grand
Movement telling of conflicts nigh
Now for battle arrayed they stand
Tongues embittered and anger high
Each has got a venturesome will
Each an eager and nimble mind
One will wield with artistic skill
Clearcut phrases and wit refined
Then the other with words defiant
Stern and strong like an angry giant
Laying on with uprooted trees
Soon will scatter a world of these
Superscholastic subtleties

Di Now then commence your arguments
and mind you both display
True wit not metaphors nor things
which any fool could say

Eu As for myself good people all
I ll tell you by and by
My own poetic worth and claims
but first of all I ll try
To show how this portentous quack
beguiled the silly fools
Whose tastes were nurtured ere he came
in Phrynichus s schools
He d bring some single mourner on
seated and veiled twould be
Achilles say or Niobe
—the face you could not see—
An empty show of tragic woe
who uttered not one thing

Di Tis true

Eu Then in the Chorus came
and rattled off a string

Eu. Pray tell, you cross-grained censor of mine,
how my Stheneboeas could harm the state.
Aes. Full many a noble dame, the wife
of a noble citizen, hemlock took,
And died, unable the shame and sin
of your Bellerophon scenes to brook.
Eu. Was then, I wonder, the tale I told
of Phaedra's passionate love untrue?
Aes. Not so: but tales of incestuous vice
the sacred poet should hide from view,
Nor ever exhibit and blazon forth
on the public stage to the public ken.
For boys a teacher at school is found,
but we, the poets, are teachers of men.
We are bound things honest and pure to speak.
Eu. And to speak great Lycabettuses, pray,
And massive blocks of Parnassian rocks,
is that things honest and pure to say?
In human fashion we ought to speak.
Aes. Alas, poor witling, and can't you see
That for mighty thoughts and heroic aims,
the words themselves must appropriate be?
And grander blocks on the ear should strike
the speech of heroes and godlike powers,
Since even the robes that invest their limbs
are statelier, grander robes than ours.
Such was my plan, but when you began,
you spoilt and degraded it all.
Eu. How so?
Aes. Your kings in tatters and rags you dressed,
and brought them on, a beggarly show,
To move, forsooth, our pity and ruth.
Eu. And what was the harm, I should like to know?
Aes. No more will a wealthy citizen now
equip for the state a galley of war.
He wraps his limbs in tatters and rags,
and whines he is "poor, too poor by far."
Di. But under his rags he is wearing a vest,
as woolly and soft as a man could wish.
Let him gull the state, and he's off to the mart
an eager, extravagant buyer of fish.
Aes. Moreover to prate, to harangue, to debate,
is now the ambition of all in the state.
Each exercise-ground is in consequence found
deserted and empty: to evil repute
Your lessons have brought our youngsters, and taught
our sailors to challenge, discuss, and refute
The orders they get from their captains and betters.
When I was alive, I protest that the knaves
Knew nothing at all, save for rations to call,
and to sing "Rhyppapae" as they pulled
through the waves.
Di. And bedad to let fly from their sterns in the eye
of the fellow who tugged at the undermost oar,
And a jolly young messmate with filth to bemerch,
and to land for a filching adventure ashore;
But now they harangue, and dispute, and won't row,
And idly and aimlessly float to and fro.
Aes. Of what ills is he not the creator and cause?
Consider the scandalous scenes that he draws,

His bawds, and his panders, his women who give
Give birth in the sacredest shrine,
Whilst others with brothers are wedded and
bedded,
And others opine
That "not to be living" is truly "to live."
And therefore our city is swarming to-day
With clerks and with demagogue monkeys, who
play
Their jackanape tricks at all times, in all places,
Deluding the people of Athens; but none
Has training enough in athletics to run
With the torch in his hand at the races.
Di. By the Powers, you are right! At the
Panathenaea
I laughed till I felt like a potsherd to see a
Pale paunchy young gentleman pounding along,
With his head butting forward, the last of the
throng,
In the direst of straits; and behold at the gates,
The Ceramites flapped him, and smacked him, and
slapped him,
In the ribs, and the loin, and the flank, and the
groin,
And still, as they spanked him, he puffed and he
panted,
Till at one mighty cuff, he discharged such a puff
That he blew out his torch and levanted.

Chorus

Dread the battle, and stout the combat,
mighty and manifold looms the war.
Hard to decide is the fight they're waging,
One like a stormy tempest raging,
One alert in the rally and skirmish,
clever to parry and foin and spar.
Nay but don't be content to sit
Always in one position only:
many the fields for your keen-edged wit.
On then, wrangle in every way,
Argue, battle, be flayed and flay,
Old and new from your stores display,
Yea, and strive with venturesome daring
something subtle and neat to say.

Fear ye this, that to-day's spectators
lack the grace of artistic lore,
Lack the knowledge they need for taking
All the points ye will soon be making?
Fear not, oh, alarm is groundless:
that, be sure, is the case no more.
All have fought the campaign ere this:
Each a book of the words is holding;
never a single point they'll miss.
Bright their natures, and now, I ween,
Newly whetted, and sharp, and keen.
Dread not any defect of wit,
Battle away without fear of it,
sure that the audience, at least, are fit.

Eu. Well then I'll turn me to your prologues now,
Beginning first to test the first beginning

Scanning and searching What s amiss?
And Why was that? And How is this?
Di Ay truly never now a man
Comes home but he begins to scan
And to his household loudly cries
Why where s my pitcher? What s the matter?
'Tis dead and gone my last year s platter
Who gnawed these olives? Bless the sprat
Who nibbled off the head of that?
And where s the garlic vanished pray
I purchased only yesterday?
—*Whereas of old our stupid youths*
Would sit with open mouths and eyes
Like any dull brained Mammacouths
Cho All this thou beholdest Achilles our boldest
And what wilt thou reply? Draw tight the rein
Lest that fiery soul of thine
Whirl thee out of the listed plain
Past the olives and o er the line
Dire and grievous the charge he brings
See thou answer him noble heart
Not with passionate bickerings
Shape thy course with a sailor s art
Reef the canvas shorten the sails
Shift them edgewise to shun the gales
When the breezes are soft and low
Then well under control you ll go
Quick and quicker to strike the foe
O first of all the Hellenic bards
high loftily towering verse to rear
And tragic phrase from the dust to raise
pour forth thy fountain with right good cheer

Aes My wrath is hot at this vile mischance
and my spirit revolts at the thought that I
Must bandy words with a fellow like *him*
but lest he should vaunt that I can t reply—
Come tell me what are the points for which
a noble poet our praise obtains
Eu For his ready wit and his counsels sage
and because the citizen folk he trains
To be better townsmen and worthier men
Aes If then you have done the very reverse
Found noble hearted and virtuous men
and altered them each and all for the worse
Pray what is the meed you deserve to get?
Di Nay ask not *him* He deserves to die
Aes For just consider what style of men
he received from me great six foot high
Heroical souls who *never* would blench
from a townsman s duties in peace or war
Not idle loafers or low buffoons
or rascally scamps such as now they are
But men who were breathing spears and helms
and the snow white plume in its crested pride
The greave and the dart and the warrior s heart
in its sevenfold casing of tough bull hide
Di He ll stun me, I know *with his armoury work*
this business is going from bad to worse
Eu And how did you manage to make them so grand
exalted and brave with your wonderful verse?

Di Come Aeschylus answer and don t stand mute
in your self willed pride and arrogant spleen
Aes A drama I wrote with the War god filled
Di Its name?
Aes 'Tis the *Seven against Thebes* that I mean.
Which whoso beheld with eagerness swelled
to rush to the battlefield there and then
Di O that was a scandalous thing you did!
You have made the Thebans mightier men
More eager by far for the business of war
Now therefore receive this punch on the head
Aes Ah *ye* might have practised the same your selves
but ye turned to other pursuits instead
Then next the *Persians* I wrote in praise
of the noblest deed that the world can show
And each man longed for the victor s wreath
to fight and to vanquish his country s foe
Di I was pleased I own when I heard their moan
for old Darius their great king dead
When they smote together their hands like this,
and Evir alake the Chorus said
Aes Aye such are the poet s appropriate works
and just consider how all alon
From the very first they have wrought you good
the noble bards the masters of song
First Orpheus taught you religious rites
and from bloody murder to stay your hands
Musaeus healing and oracle lore
and Hesiod all the culture of lands,
The time to gather the time to plough
And gat not Homer his glory divine
By singing of valour and honour and right
and the sheen of the battle extended line
The ranging of troops and the arming of men?
Di O ay but he didn t teach *that* I opine
To Pantacles when he was leading the show
I couldn t imagine what he was at
He had fastened his helm on the top of his head
he was trying to fasten his plume upon that
Aes But others many and brave he taught
of whom was Lamachus hero true
And thence my spirit the impress took
and many a lion heart chief I drew
Patrocluses Teucers illustrious names
for I fain the citizen folk would spur
To stretch themselves to *their* measure and height
whenever the trumpet of war they hear
But Phaedras and Stheneboeas? No!
no harlotry business deformed my plays.
And none can say that ever I drew
a love sick woman in all my days.
Eu For *you* no lot or portion had got
in Queen Aphrodite
Aes Thank Heaven for that
But ever on you and yours my friend
the mighty goddess mightily sat
Yourself she cast to the ground at last
Di O ay that uncommonly pat
You showed how cuckolds are made and lo
you were struck yourself by the very same fate

5 I never tack his bottle of oil to this
N man blest in e ery single thi g
One f nobl birth b t lacking means
... her baseborn,
Aes Lost his bottle of oil.
D Euripides!
Eu W ll?
Di Lower your sa ls my boy
This bo le of oil is going t blow a gale
Eu O b Demeter I don t care one bit
Now from his hands I ll strike that bottle of o l
Di Go on then go b t ware the bottle of oil
Eu "On e Cadmus, q tting the S donian town
A-...r s offspring
Aes Lost h s bottle of oil.
Di O pray my man b y off that bottle of oil
Or else h ll smash our prol gues all to b ts.
Eu I buy of h m
Di If my ad ice you ll take
Eu No, no, I e man a prologue yet to say
T h h can t tack n h bottle of o l
P ops, the son of Tantalus, while driving
His ma es to Pisa
A Lost his bottle f oil
Di There! he tacked n the bottl f oil again
O for hea en s sake, pay h m ts price dear boy
You'll get t for an bol, sp ck and span
Eu Not yet, by Zeus I e plenty of prologues lef
"Oeneus once reaping
Aes Lost his bottle of oil
Eu Pray let me finish o e entire l ne first
"Oeneus once reaping an abundant har est
Off ri g th firstfruits
Aes Lost his bottle f l
Di What in the et f off ri g? F ! Who st l it?
Eu O don t keep botheri g! Let him try w th this!
Zeus, as by Truth s own o e the tal is told
Di No, he ll cut in w th Lost his bottle of o l!
Those bottles of oil on ll yo r prologues seem
To gather and gr w lik st es upon the ye
Turn t his melod es now f r goodness sake
Eu O I ca easily how that h s a poor
M lody maker makes tham all lik
Cho What O what w ll be don !
Stran to think that he da e
Blame the bard wh has w n
Mor than all n a days,
Fam nd praise f r his lays,
La so many and fa
Much I marvel t hear
What th harg he will bri g
Gainst our tragedy king
Yea f himself d I fear
Eu Wonderful lays! O yes, y u ll see d rectly
I'll cut do n all his metrical strain to o
Di And I I'll tak som pebbles, d keep count

Eu Lord of Phthia Achilles why he ring the vo e of the hero-di d ng
Hah! sm ting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
We by the lake who abide are adorin our ancestor Hermes
Hah! smitin ! approachest thou not to the rescue?
Di O Aeschylu twice art thou smitten!
Eu Hearken to me great king yea hearken Atreides thou noblest of ll the Achaeans
Hah! smit ng! approachest thou not to the rescue?
Di Thr ce Aeschylus, thrice art thou sm tten!
Eu Hu h! the bee wardens are here they will qu kly the Temple of Artemis open
Hah! smit ng! pproachest thou n t to the resc e?
I will expound (for I kno it) the omen the chief ta n encountered
Hah! mit g! pproachest thou not to the escue?
Di O Zeu and K g the terrible lot of smit ngs!
I ll to the bath I m ery su e my k dneys
Are qu te inflamed and swoln with ll these sm tings.
Eu Wait till y u ve heard another batch of lays
Culled f om his lyre accompan ed melod es
Di Go on the go but no more smitings, please.
Eu H w the tw n throned powers of Achaea th lo ds f the mighty H llenes
O phlattothr ttophlattothrat!
Sendeth th Sph nx the u chancy the chieftain es bloodhou d
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
La h th fie e w th bra d and hand the avengers th t r ible eagle
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
So f r th s ft winged hound of the air he pro- ided a booty
O phlattothrattophlatt thrat!
The thr ng down beari n Aias.
O phlattoth attophlattothrat!
Di Whence comes that phlattothrat? From M rath or
Where p cked you up these cable twister s trains?
Aes Fr m oblest sour e for n blest nd I b ou ht th m
U ll n the Muse holy field
The self same flow rs s Phry ch s to cull.
But he f om all thi g r tten draws h lays,
From Carian flut gs, catches of Meletus,
Da c music d rge You shall hear d ectly
Bri g me the lyr Y t heref re need a lyre
F songs l ke these? Wher s she that ba gs and ja gles
H ca ta ts? Eurip de s Muse
Present yourself fit goddess f r fit erse
D The M se herself can t be a wanton? No!
A s Halcyo s, who by the e er rippl ng
W es f the sea are babbl
De g your pl mes with the d ops that fall
F om w ngs in th salt spray dabbl g

I T P se duri g hich the m c of flut heard The music conti to the end f li 1277 an accompani ment t th recitati e

Of this fine poet s plays Why he s obscure
Even in the enunciation of the facts
Di Which of them will you test?
Eu Many but first
Give us that famous one from the Oresteia
Di St! Silence all! Now Aeschylus begin
Aes Grave Hermes witnessing a father s power
Be thou my saviour and mine aid to day
For here I come and hither I return
Di Any fault there?
Eu A dozen faults and more
Di Eh! why the lines are only three in all
Eu But every one contains a s ore of faults
Di Now Aeschylus keep silent if you don t
You won t get off with three iambic lines
Aes *Silent for him!*
Di If *my* advice you ll take
Eu Why at first starting here s a fault skyhigh
Aes (*to* DIONYSUS) You see your *folly?*
Di Have your way I care not
Aes (*to* EURIPIDES) What is my fault?
Eu Begin the lines again
Aes Grave Hermes witnessing a father s power—
Eu And this beside his murdered father s grave
Orestes speaks?
Aes I say not otherwise
Eu Then does he mean that when his father fell
By craft and violence at a woman s hand
The god of craft was witnessing the deed?
Aes It was not he it was the Helper Hermes
He called the grave and this he showed by adding
It was his sire s prerogative he held
Eu *Why this is worse than all If from his father*
He held this office grave why then—
Di He was
A graveyard rifler on his father s side
Aes Bacchus the wine you drink is stale and fusty
Di Give him another (*to* EURIPIDES) you look out for faults.
Aes Be thou my saviour and mine aid to-day
For here I come and hither I return
Eu The same thing twice says clever Aeschylus
Di How twice?
Eu Why just consider I ll explain
I come says he and I return says he
It s the same thing to come and to return
Di Aye just as if you said Good fellow lend me
A kneading trough likewise a trough to knead in
Aes It is not so you everlasting talker
They re not the same the words are right enough
Di How so? inform me how you use the words
Aes A man not banished from his home may come
To any land with no especial chance
A home bound exile both returns and comes
Di O good by Apollo!
What do you say Euripides to that?
Eu I say Orestes never did return
He came in secret *nobody recalled him*
Di O good by Hermes!
(*Aside*) I ve not the least suspicion what he means.
Eu Repeat another line
Di Ay Aeschylus
Repeat one instantly *you* mark what s wrong
Aes Now on this funeral mound I call my father
To hear to hearken
Eu There he is again
To hear to hearken the same thing exactly
Di Aye but he s speaking to the dead you knave
Who cannot hear us though we call them thrice
Aes And how do you make *your* prologues?
Eu You shall hear
And if you find one single thing said twice
Or any useless padding spit upon me
Di *Well fire away I m all agog to hear*
Your very accurate and faultless prologues
Eu A happy man was Oedipus at first—
Aes Not so by Zeus a most unhappy man
Who not yet born nor yet conceived Apollo
Foretold would be his father s murderer
How could *he* be a happy man at first?
Eu Then he became the wretchedest of men
Aes Not so by Zeus he never ceased to be
No sooner born than they exposed the babe,
(And that in winter) in an earthen crock
Lest he should grow a man and slay his father
Then with both ankles pierced and swoln he limped
Away to Polybus still young he married
An ancient crone and her his mother too
Then scratched out both his eyes
Di Happy indeed
Had he been Erasinides s colleague!
Eu Nonsense I say my prologues are firstrate
Aes Nay then by Zeus no longer line by line
I ll maul your phrases but with heaven to aid
I ll smash your prologues with a bottle of oil
Eu You mine with a *bottle of oil?*
Aes With only one
You frame your prologues so that each and all
Fit in with a bottle of oil or coverlet skin
Or reticule bag I ll prove it here and now
Eu You ll prove it? You?
Aes I will
Di Well then begin
Eu Aegyptus sailing with his fifty sons
As ancient legends mostly tell the tale
Touching at Argos
Aes Lost his bottle of oil
Eu Hang it what s that? Confound that bottle of oil!
Di Give him another let him try again
Eu Bacchus who clad in fawnskins leaps and bounds
With torch and thyrsus in the choral dance
Along Parnassus
Aes Lost his bottle of oil
Di Ah me we are stricken—with that bottle again!
Eu Pooh pooh that s nothing I ve a prologue here

... ever tack his bottle of oil to this
No man is best in every single thing,
One's of noble birth, but lacking means,
Another lowborn,
Ae. Lost his bottle of oil.
Di. Euripides!
Eu. Well
Di. Lower your sails, my boy
This bottle of oil is going to blow a gale
Eu. O by Demeter I don't care one bit
Now from his hands I'll strike that bottle of oil.
Di. Go on then, but beware the bottle of oil.
Eu. "Once Cadmus, quitting the Sidonian town,
...
Ae. Lost his bottle of oil.
Di. O very ... buy off that bottle of oil,
Or else he'll smash our prologues all to bits.
Eu. I buy of him
Di. If my advice you'll take.
Eu. No, no, I've many a prologue ... say
... can't tack on his bottle of oil.
Pelops, the son of Tantalus, while driving
... to Pisa
Ae. Lost his bottle of oil.
Di. There! he tacked on the bottle of oil again.
O for heaven's sake pay him the price, dear boy
You'll get it for an obol, spick and span
Eu. Not yet, by Zeus I've plenty of prologues
left.
"Oeneus once reaping"
Ae. Lost his bottle of oil.
Eu. Pray let me finish one entire line first.
"Oeneus once reaping an abundant harvest
Offering the firstfruit
Ae. Lost his bottle of oil.
Di. What, in the act of offering? Fie! Who stole it?
Eu. O don't keep bothering! Let him try with
this
"Zeus, as by Truth's own voice the tale is told.
Di. No, he'll cut in with 'Lost his bottle of oil!'"
Those bottles of oil on all your prologues seem
To gather and grow like styes upon the eye.
Turn to his melodies now for goodness' sake.
Eu. O I can easily show that he's a poor
Melody maker makes them all alike.
Ch. What O what will be done!
Strange to think that he dare
Blame the bard who has won,
More than all in our days,
Fame and praise for his lays,
Lays so many and fair.
Much I marvel to hear
What the charge he will bring
'Gainst our tragedy king.
Yea for himself do I fear
Eu. Wonderful lays! O yes, you'll see directly
I'll cut down all his metrical strains to one.
Di. And I, I'll take some pebbles, and keep count

Eu. Lord of Phthia, Achilles, why hearing the voice of the hero-dividing
Hah! smiting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
We, by the lake who abide are adoring our ancestor Hermes.
Hah! smiting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
Di. O Aeschylus, twice art thou smitten!
Eu. Hearken to me great king, yea hearken Atreides, thou noblest of all the Achaeans.
Hah! smiting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
Di. Thrice Aeschylus, thrice art thou smitten!
Eu. Hush! the bee wardens are here they will quickly the Temple of Artemis open.
Hah! smiting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
I will expound (for I know it) the omen the chieftains encountered
Hah! smiting! approachest thou not to the rescue?
Di. O Zeus and King the terrible lot of smitings!
I'll to the bath I'm very sure my kidneys
Are quite inflamed and swoln with all these smitings.
Eu. Wait till you've heard another batch of lays
Culled from his lyre-accompanied melodies.
Di. Go on then, go but no more smitings, please.
Eu. How the twin throned powers of Achaea, the lords of the mighty Hellenes.
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
Sendeth the Sphinx, the unchancy the chieftainess bloodhound
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
Launcheth fierce with brand and hand the avengers the terrible eagle
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
So for the swift winged hounds of the air he provided booty
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!
The throng down bearing on Aias.
O phlattothrattophlattothrat!"
Di. Whence comes that phlattothrat? From Marathon, or
Where picked you up these cable twister's strains?
Aes. From noblest source for noblest ends I brought them,
Unwilling in the Muses' holy field
The self same flowers as Phrynichus to cull.
But *he* from all things rotten draws his lays,
From Carian flutings, catches of Meletus,
Dance music dirges. You shall hear directly
Bring me the lyre. Yet wherefore need a lyre
For songs like these? Where's she that bangs and jangles
Her castanets? Euripides's Muse
Present yourself, fit goddess for fit verse
Di. The Muse herself can't be a wanton? No!
Aes. Halcyons, who by the ever rippling
Waves of the sea are babbling
Dewing your plumes with the drops that fall
From wings in the salt spray dabbling

[1] Here a pause during which the music of a flute is heard. The music continues to the end of line 1277 as an accompaniment to the recitative

Of this fine poet s plays Why he s obscure
Even in the enunciation of the facts
Di Which of them will you test?
Eu Many but first
Give us that famous one from the Oresteia
Di St! Silence all! Now Aeschylus begin
Aes Grave Hermes witnessing a father s power
Be thou my saviour and mine aid to day
For here I come and hither I return
Di Any fault there?
Eu A dozen faults and more
Di Eh! why the lines are only three in all
Eu But every one contains a score of faults
Di Now Aeschylus keep silent if you don t
You won t get off with three iambic lines
Aes Silent for *him*!
Di If *my* advice you ll take
Eu Why at first starting here s a fault skyhigh
Aes (*to* DIONYSUS) You see your folly?
Di Have your way I care not
Aes (*to* EURIPIDES) What is my fault?
Eu Begin the lines again
Aes Grave Hermes witnessing a father s power—
Eu And this beside his murdered father s grave
Orestes speaks?
Aes I say not otherwise
Eu Then does he mean that when his father fell
By craft and violence at a woman s hand
The god of craft was witnessing the deed?
Aes It was not he it was the Helper Hermes
He called the grave and this he showed by adding
It was his sire s prerogative he held
Eu Why this is worse than all If from his father
He held this office grave why then—
Di He was
A graveyard rifler on his father s side
Aes Bacchus the wine you drink is stale and fusty
Di Give him another (*to* EURIPIDES) you look out for faults.
Aes Be thou my saviour and mine aid to day
For here I come and hither I return
Eu The same thing twice says clever Aeschylus
Di How twice?
Eu Why just consider I ll explain
I come says he and I return says he
It s the same thing to come and to return
Di Aye just as if you said Good fellow lend me
A kneading trough likewise a trough to knead in
Aes It is not so you everlasting talker
They re not the same the words are right enough
Di How so? inform me how you use the words
Aes A man not banished from his home may come
To any land with no especial chance
A home bound exile both returns and comes
Di O good by Apollo!
What do you say Euripides to that?
Eu I say Orestes never did return
He came in secret nobody recalled him
Di O good by Hermes!
(*Aside*) I ve not the least suspicion what he means.
Eu Repeat another line
Di Ay Aeschylus
Repeat one instantly *you* mark what s wrong
Aes Now on this funeral mound I call my father
To hear to hearken
Eu There he is again
To hear to hearken the same thing exactly
Di Aye but he s speaking to the dead you knave
Who cannot hear us though we call them thrice
Aes And how do you make *your* prologues?
Eu You shall hear
And if you find one single thing said twice
Or any useless padding spit upon me
Di Well fire away I m all agog to hear
Your very accurate and faultless prologues
Eu A happy man was Oedipus at first—
Aes Not so by Zeus a most unhappy man
Who not yet born nor yet conceived Apollo
Foretold would be his father s murderer
How could *he* be a happy man at first?
Eu Then he became the wretchedest of men
Aes Not so by Zeus he never ceased to be
No sooner born than they exposed the babe,
(And that in winter) in an earthen crock
Lest he should grow a man and slay his father
Then with both ankles pierced and swoln he limped
Away to Polybus still young he married
An ancient crone and her his mother too
Then scratched out both his eyes
Di Happy indeed
Had he been Erasinides s colleague!
Eu Nonsense I say my prologues are firstrate
Aes Nay then by Zeus no longer line by line
I ll maul your phrases but with heaven to aid
I ll smash your prologues with a bottle of oil
Eu You mine with a bottle of oil?
Aes With only one
You frame your prologues so that each and all
Fit in with a bottle of oil or coverlet skin
Or reticule bag I ll prove it here and now
Eu You ll prove it? You?
Aes I will
Di Well then begin
Eu Aegyptus sailing with his fifty sons
As ancient legends mostly tell the tale
Touching at Argos
Aes Lost his bottle of oil
Eu Hang it what s that? Confound that bottle of oil!
Di Give him another let him try again
Eu Bacchus who clad in fawnskins leaps and bounds
With torch and thyrsus in the choral dance
Along Parnassus
Aes Lost his bottle of oil
Di Ah me we are stricken—with that bottle again!
Eu Pooh pooh that s nothing I ve a prologue here

Di. I'll tell you.
Achilles threw two singles and a four
Come, speak your lines this is your last set to.
Eu. In his right hand he grasped an iron clamped mace
Aes. Chariot on chariot corpse on corpse was hurled
Di. There now l again he has done you
Eu. Done me? How?
Di. H thre two chari t a d two corpses in
F e-score Egyptia s could not l ft that weight
Aes. No mor of line fo l ne let him—himself,
H. childr n, wi Cephisoph n—get in
W th all his books coll cted in his arms.
T lines of mine hall e wei h the lot
Di. Both are my friends I can t decide between them
I don t desire to be at odds with either
One is so cl er one del ghts me so.
Pluto (*co ni g forward*) Th en you ll effect nothing for which y u came?
Di. And how if I decide?
Pl. Then take the winner
So) your j urney not be mad in a n
Di. Hea en bless your Highness! Listen, I came down
A er a poet.
Eu. T what end?
Di. That so
The city sa ed may keep her ch ral games.
Now t en, h chev r f yo tw shall best
Ad ise th *city he* shall come w th me
And first of Al biades, l t ea h
Sa what he th k th city tr a l so e
Eu. What does she think he self bout him?
Di. What?
Sh lo es, and hates, and longs to h v h m back.
B t gi e me your d ce abo it th ma
Eu. I loathe a townsman wh is low to a d
And swift to hurt, his town who ways and means
Finds for himself, b t finds not for th state
Di. Poseid b t that s sma t! (*to* *E* CHYLU)
And what say you?
Aes. T er best t rear no li n n the tate
B t hav g eared t s best to h m r him
Di. By Zeu th Sa our t ll I can t dec de.
One is so clever nd so clear the other
B t on e again Let e h in turn decla e
What plan of safety f the tate ye e g t
Eu. [First w th Cinesias i g Cleoc tus,
Then zephyrs waft th m o er th wat ry plain.
Di. A f nny sight I own but wl ere the sense?
Eu. If, hen the fleet engag they h ld ng cruet
S ould rain down vin gar in th foemen s eyes,]
I know and I can t ll you.
Di. Tell way
Eu. When things mistrusted now shall trusted be
And trusted things, mistrusted
Di. How! I don t
Qui e mprehend Be clear and not so clever
Eu. If we m strust those citizens of ours
Whom now we trust and those employ whom now
We don t employ the city will be sa ed
If on our present t ck we fail we surely
Shall find sal ation in the opposite course
Di. Good O Palamedes! Good you genius you
Is this *your* cleverness or Cephisoph n s?
Eu. This is my own the cruet plan was his.
Di. (*to* AESCHYLUS) Now you
Aes. But tell me whom the city uses.
The good and useful?
D What are you dreamin of?
She hates and loathes them
A s Does she lo e the bad?
Di. Not love them no she uses them perforce
Aes. How can one sa e a city such as this,
Whom *neither frieze nor woollen tunic* suits?
D O if to earth you rise find out some way
Aes. There will I speak I cannot answer h re
Di. Nay nay send up your guerdon from below
Aes. When they shall count the enemy s soil their own
And thei s the enemy s when they know that ships
Are their true wealth their so-called wealth *delu si n*
Di. Aye, but the justices suck that down you *know*
Pl. Now then decide
Di. I will and thus I ll do it
I ll choose the man in whom my soul del ghts.
Eu. O recollect the gods by whom you swore
You d take me home again and choose your frie ds.
Di. 'Twas my tongue swore my choice is—Aeschylus.
E Hah! what ha e you do e?
D Done? Given th victor s prize
To Aeschylus why not?
E And do you dare
Look in my face after that shamef l deed?
Di. What s hameful, if the aud ence think not so?
Eu. Ha e yo no heart? W etch would you lea e me dead?
D Who knows if death be life and life be death
And breath be m tto broth and sleep a sheepskin?
Pl. Now Dionysus, come ye n
D What for?
Pl. And sup before ye go
Di. A b ght idea
I faith, I m now ise indisposed for that
E eu t ES HYLUS EUR IDES P UTO *and* D ONY US

Chorus

Blest the man wh possesses a
Keen tell gent mind
Thi full often we find
He the ba d of e own
Now t earth reasc nds,
Goes, a joy to his t wn
Goes, a joy to his fr ends,

Spiders ever with twir r r r rling fingers
Weaving the warp and the woof
Little brittle network fretwork
Under the coigns of the roof

The minstrel shuttle's care

Where in the front of the dark prowed ships
Yarely the flute loving dolphin skips

Races here and oracles there

And the joy of the young vines smiling
And the tendril of grapes care beguiling
O embrace me my child O embrace me
(*To* DIONYSUS) You see this foot?
Di I do
Aes And this?
Di And that one too
Aes (*to* EURIPIDES) You such stuff who compile
Dare my songs to upbraid
You whose songs in the style
Of Cyrene's embraces are made
So much *for them but still I'd like to show*
The way in which your monodies are framed
O darkly light mysterious Night
What may this Vision mean
Sent from the world unseen
With baleful omens rife
A thing of lifeless life
A child of sable night
A ghastly curdling sight
In black funereal veils
With murder murder in its eyes
And great enormous nails?
Light ye the lanterns my maidens
and dipping your jugs in the stream
Draw me the dew of the water
and heat it to boiling and steam
So will I wash me away the ill effects of my dream
God of the sea!
My dream's come true
Ho lodgers ho
This portent view
Glyce has vanished carrying off my cock
My cock that crew!
O Mania help! O Oreads of the rock
Pursue! pursue!
For I poor girl was working within
Holding my distaff heavy and full
Twir r r r rling my hand as the threads I spin
Weaving an excellent bobbin of wool
Thinking To-morrow I'll go to the fair
In the dusk of the morn and be selling it there
But he to the blue upflew upflew
On the lightliest tips of his wings outspread
To me he bequeathed but woe but woe
And tears sad tears from my eyes o'erflow
Which I the bereaved must shed must shed
O children of Ida sons of Crete
Grasping your bows to the rescue come
Twinkle about on your restless feet
Stand in a circle around her home.
O Artemis thou maid divine
Dictynna huntress fair to see
O bring that keen nosed pack of thine
And hunt through all the house with me.
O Hecate with flameful brands
O Zeus's daughter arm thine hands
Those swiftliest hands both right and left
Thy rays on Glyce's cottage throw
That I serenely there may go
And search by moonlight for the theft
Di Enough of both your odes
Aes Enough for me
Now would I bring the fellow to the scales
That that alone shall test our poetry now
And prove whose words are weightiest his or mine.
Di Then both come hither since I needs must weigh
The art poetic like a pound of cheese
Here a large balance is brought out and placed upon the stage
Cho O the labour these wits go through!
O the wild extravagant new
Wonderful things they are going to do!
Who but they would ever have thought of it?
Why if a man had happened to meet me
Out in the street and intelligence brought of it
I should have thought he was trying to cheat me
Thought that his story was false and deceiving
That were a tale I could never believe in
Di Each of you stand beside his scale
Aes and Eu We're here
Di And grasp it firmly whilst ye speak your lines
Each holds his own scale ready while he speaks his line into it
And don't let go until I cry Cuckoo
Aes and Eu Ready!
Di Now speak your lines into the scale
Eu O that the Argo had not winged her way—
Aes River Spercheius cattle grazing haunts—
Di Cuckoo! let go O look by far the lowest
His scale sinks down
Eu Why how came that about?
Di He threw a river in like some wool seller
Wetting his wool to make it weigh the more
But *you* threw in a light and wingèd word
Eu Come let him match another verse with mine
Di Each to his scale
Aes and Eu We're ready
Di Speak your lines.
Eu Persuasion's only shrine is eloquent speech
Aes Death loves not gifts alone amongst the gods
Di Let go let go Down goes his scale again
He threw in Death the heaviest ill of all
Eu And I Persuasion the most lovely word
Di A vain and empty sound devoid of sense.
Think of some heavier weighted line of yours,
To drag your scale down something strong and big
Eu Where have I got one? Where? Let's see

Di. I'll tell you.
Achilles threw two si les and a four
Come, speak your lines this is your last set to.

Eu. In his right hand he grasped n iron clamped mace."

Aes. Chariot on chariot corpse on corpse was hurled.

Di. There now! again he has done you

Eu. Done me? How?

Di. He threw two chariots and two corpses in
Five-score Egyptians could not lift that weight.

Aes. Not for f line for line let him—himself,
His children, wife, Cephisopho —get in,
With all his books collected in his arms.
Two lines of mine shall o erweigh the lot

Di. Both are my friends I can t decide between them
I don t desire to be at odds with either
One is so clever on d lights me so.

Pluto (*coming forward*) Then you ll ffect nothing for which you came?

Di. And how if I decide?

Pl. Then take the winner
So will your journey not be mad n ain

Di. Heaven bless your Highness! Listen, I came down
for a poet.

Eu. To what end?

Di. That so
The city sa ed may keep her choral games.
Now then, whichever of you t o shall best
Advise the city *he* shall come th me.
And first of Alcibiades, let each
Say what he thinks the city will do.

Eu. What does she think herself about him?

Di. What?
She loves, and hates, and longs to have him back.
But give me your advice about the man.

Eu. I loathe townsman who is slow to aid
And swift to hurt, his town ho ways d means
Finds for himself, but finds not for the tat

Di. Poseidon, but that smart! (*to* AESCHYLUS)
And what say yo

Aes. 'Twere best t ear no lion n the state
But tha ing eared, tis best to h mour him

Di. By Zeus the Saviour still I can t decide.
One is so clever nd so clear th other
So once gain. Let each in turn declare
What plan of saf ty for the tat you got.

Eu. [First with Cinesias wing Cleocritus,
Then zephyrs waft th m er the watery plain

Di. A f n ght I own but wh t s the sense?

Eu. If hen the fleet engage, they holding cruets
Should rain down n gar in the foemen s eyes,]
I know and I can tell you.

Di. Tell away

Eu. When things, mistru ted now shall trusted be
And trusted things, mistrusted

Di. How! I don t
Quite comprehend. Be clear and not so clever

Eu. If we mistrust those citizens of ours
Whom now we trust and those employ whom now
We don t employ the city will be saved
If on our present tack we fail, we surely
Shall find salvation in the opposite course

Di. Good O Palamedes! Good you genius you.
Is this your cleverness or Cephisophon s?

Eu. This is my own the cruet plan was his.

Di. (*to* AESCHYLUS) Now you.

Aes. But tell me whom the city uses.
The good and useful?

Di. What are you dreaming of?
She hates and loathes them

Aes. Does she love the bad?

Di. Not love them, no she uses them perforce.

Aes. How can one save a city such as this,
Whom neither frieze nor woollen tunic suits?

Di. O if to earth you rise, find out some way

Aes. There will I speak I cannot answer here

Di. Nay nay send up your guerdon from below

Aes. When they shall count the enemy s soil their own,
And theirs the enemy s when they know that ships
Are their true wealth, their so-called wealth delusion

Di. Aye, but the justices suck that down you know

Pl. Now then decide.

Di. I will and thus I'll do it.
I ll choose the man in whom my soul delights.

Eu. O recollect the gods by whom you swore
You d take me home again and choose your friends.

Di. 'Twas my tongue swore my choice is—Aeschylus.

Eu. Hah! what have you done?

Di. Done? Given the victor s prize
To Aeschylus why not?

Eu. And do you dare
Look in my face after that shameful deed?

Di. What s shameful, if the audience think not so?

Eu. Have you no heart? Wretch would you leave me dead?

Di. Who knows if death be life and life be death,
And breath be mutton broth and sleep a sheepskin?

Pl. Now Dionysus, come ye in,

Di. What for?

Pl. And sup before ye go.

Di. A bright idea.
I'faith, I m now se ind sposed fo that

Exeunt AESCHYLUS EURIPIDES PLUTO *and* DIONYSUS.

Chorus

Blest the man who possesses a
Keen intelligent mind
This full often we find
He the bard of renown,
Now to earth reascends,
Goes, joyous to his town
Goes, joyous to his friends,

Spiders ever with twir r r r rling fingers
Weaving the warp and the woof
Little brittle network fretwork
Under the coigns of the roof

The minstrel shuttle s care

Where in the front of the dark prowed ships
Yarely the flute loving dolphin skips

Races here and oracles there

And the joy of the young vines smiling
And the tendril of grapes care beguiling
O embrace me my child O embrace me
(*To* DIONYSUS) You see this foot?

Di I do

Aes And this?

Di And that one too

Aes (*to* EURIPIDES) You such stuff who compile
Dare my songs to upbraid
You whose songs in the style
Of Cyrene s embraces are made
So much for them but still I d like to show
The way in which your monodies are framed
O darkly light mysterious Night
What may this Vision mean
Sent from the world unseen
With baleful omens rife
A thing of lifeless life
A child of sable night
A ghastly curdling sight
In black funereal veils
With murder murder in its eyes
And great enormous nails?
Light ye the lanterns my maidens
and dipping your jugs in the stream
Draw me the dew of the water
and heat it to boiling and steam
So will I wash me away the ill effects of my dream
God of the sea!
My dream s come true
Ho lodgers ho
This portent view
Glyce has vanished carrying off my cock
My cock that crew!
O Mania help! O Oreads of the rock
Pursue! pursue!
For I poor girl was working within
Holding my distaff heavy and full
Twir r r r rling my hand as the threads I spin
Weaving an excellent bobbin of wool
Thinking To-morrow I ll go to the fair
In the dusk of the morn and be selling it there
But he to the blue upflew upflew
On the lightliest tips of his wings outspread
To me he bequeathed but woe but woe
And tears sad tears from my eyes o erflow
Which I the bereaved must shed must shed
O children of Ida sons of Crete
Grasping your bows to the rescue come
Twinkle about on your restless feet,
Stand in a circle around her home
O Artemis thou maid divine
Dictynna huntress fair to see
O bring that keen nosed pack of thine
And hunt through all the house with me.
O Hecate with flameful brands
O Zeus s daughter arm thine hands
Those swiftliest hands both right and left
Thy rays on Glyce s cottage throw
That I serenely there may go
And search by moonlight for the theft

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Aes Enough for me
Now would I bring the fellow to the scales
That that alone shall test our poetry now
And prove whose words are weightiest his or mine

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Here a large balance is brought out and placed upon the stage

Cho O the labour these wits go through!
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Who but they would ever have thought of it?
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Out in the street and intelligence brought of it
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Thought that his story was false and deceiving
That were a tale I could never believe in

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Aes and Eu We re here

Di And grasp it firmly whilst ye speak your lines

Each holds his own scale steady while he speaks his line into it

And don t let go until I cry Cuckoo

Aes and Eu Ready!

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Eu O that the Argo had not winged her way—

Aes River Spercheius cattle grazing haunts—

Di Cuckoo! let go O look by far the lowest
His scale sinks down

Eu Why how came that about?

Di He threw a river in like some wool seller
Wetting his wool to make it weigh the more
But *you* threw in a light and wingèd word

Eu Come let him match another verse with mine

Di *Each to his scale*

Aes and Eu We re ready

Di Speak your lines.

Eu Persuasion s only shrine is eloquent speech

Aes Death loves not gifts alone amongst the gods

Di Let go let go Down goes his scale again
He threw in Death the heaviest ill of all

Eu And I Persuasion the most lovely word

Di A vain and empty sound devoid of sense
Think of some heavier weighted line of yours,
To drag your scale down something strong and big

Eu Where have I got one? Where? Let s see

THE LYSISTRATA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LYSISTRATA	A HERALD OF THE LACONIANS
CALONICE	LACONIAN AMBASSADORS
MYRRHINE	ATHENIAN AMBASSADORS
LAMPITO	IDLERS
MAGISTRATES	A PORTER
STRATYLLIS	CHORUS OF MEN
CINESIAS	CHORUS OF WOMEN
A CHILD OF CINESIAS	

It is daybreak at Athens and LYSISTRATA, *a young and beautiful woman, is standing alone with marks of evident anxiety in her countenance and demeanour. The scene represents the sloping hill which rises from the Lower to the Upper City. In the background are the Propylaea, the splendid portals of the Athenian Acropolis.* LYSISTRATA *is on the look-out for persons who do not come, and after exhibiting various symptoms of impatience she suddenly begins to speak with abrupt and indignant emphasis.*

Lysistrata Now were they summoned to some shrine of Bacchus,
Pan, Colias, Genetyllis,[1] there had been
No room to stir, so thick the crowd of timbrels.
And now!—there's not one woman to be seen.
Stay, here comes one, my neighbour Calonice.
Good morning, friend.

Enter CALONICE.

Calonice Good morn, Lysistrata.
What is the matter? don't look gloomy, child.
It don't become you to knit knot your eyebrows.
Ly My heart is hot within me, Calonice,
And sore I grieve for sake of womankind
Because the men account us all to be
Sly shifty rogues,
Ca And so, by Zeus, we are.
Ly Yet though I told them to be here betimes,
To talk on weighty business, they don't come,
They're fast asleep.
Ca They'll come, dear heart, they'll come.
'Tis hard, you know, for women to get out.
One has to mind her husband, one, to rouse
Her servant, one, to put the child to sleep,
One, has to wash him, one, to give him pap.
Ly Ah but they've other duties still more pressing
Than such as these.
Ca Well but, Lysistrata,
Why have you, dear, convoked us? Is the matter
A weighty subject?
Ly Weighty? yes.
Ca And pregnant?
Ly Pregnant by Zeus.
Ca Why ever don't we come then?
Ly No, it's not that; we'd have come fast enough
For such like nonsense. 'Tis a scheme I've hit on,
Tossing it over many a sleepless night.
Ca Tossing it over? then it's light, I fancy.
Ly Light? very so light my dear, that all the hopes
Of all the States are anchored on us women.
Ca Anchored on us! a slender stay to lean on.
Ly Ay, all depends on us: whether as well the
Peloponnesians all shall cease to be—
Ca Sure and 'tis better they should cease to be.
Ly And all the dwellers in Boeotia perish—
Ca Except the eels; do pray except the eels.
Ly But about Athens, mark you, I won't utter
Such words as these; you must supply my meaning.
But if the women will but meet here now,
Boeotian girls, Peloponnesian girls,
And we ourselves, we'll save the States between us.
Ca What can we women do? What brilliant scheme
Can we, poor souls, accomplish? we who sit
Trimmed and bedizened in our saffron silks,
Our cambric robes, and little finical shoes.
Ly Why they're the very things I hope will save us,
Your saffron dresses, and your finical shoes,
Your paints, and perfumes, and your robes of gauze.
Ca How mean you, save us?
Ly So that never more
Men in our day shall lift the hostile spear.
Ca O by the Twain,[2] I'll use the saffron dye.
Ly Or grasp the shield—
Ca I'll don the cambric robe.
Ly Or draw the sword.
Ca I'll wear the finical shoes.
Ly Should not the women, then, have come betimes?
Ca Come? no, by Zeus, they should have flown with wings.

[1] Gods of Wine and Love, "the chief pleasures, according to Aristophanes, of the Athenian women."—Rogers.

[2] Demeter and Persephone.

Just because he possesses a
Keen intelligent mind
Right it is and befitting
Not by Socrates sitting
Idle talk to pursue
Stripping tragedy art of
All things noble and true
Surely the mind to school
Fine drawn quibbles to seek
Fine set phrases to speak
Is but the part of a *fool*!

Re enter PLUTO *and* AESCHYLUS

Pl Farewell then Aeschylus great and wise
Go save our state by the maxims rare
Of thy noble thought and the fools chastise
For many a fool dwells there
And *this* (*handing him a rope*) to Cleophon give
my friend
And *this* to the revenue raising crew
Nichomachus Myrmex next I send
And *this* to Archenomus too
And bid them all that without delay
To my realm of the dead they hasten away
For if they loiter above I swear
I ll come myself and arrest them there
And branded and fettered the slaves shall
go
With the vilest rascal in all the town
Adeimantus son of Leucolophus down
Down down to the darkness below
Aes I take the mission This chair of mine
Meanwhile to Sophocles here commit
(For I count him next in our craft divine)
Till I come once more by thy side to sit
But as for that rascally scoundrel there
That low buffoon that worker of ill
O let him not sit in my vacant chair
Not even against his will
Pl (*to the* CHORUS) Escort him up with your
mystic throngs
While the holy torches quiver and blaze
Escort him up with his own sweet songs
And his noble festival lays
Cho First as the poet triumphant
is passing away to the light
Grant him success on his journey
ye powers that are ruling below
Grant that he find for the city
good counsels to guide her aright
So we at last shall be freed
from the anguish the fear and the woe
Freed from the onsets of war
Let Cleophon now and his band
Battle if battle they must
far away in their own fatherland

Ly O dearest friend my one tru friend of all
Ca Well, but suppose w d the things you say
Pa Hea en a ert t but p t case we do,
Shall t be nearer Peace?
Ly Much m h much nearer
For if we women ll but sit t home
Pow'ered and trimmed clad in our da nt est lawn
Em loving all our charms, and all our arts
T wa men slo e a d when we e won it then
Repel them, firmly till they end the war
We'll soon get Peace again be sure of that
La Sae Menelaus, when h gl wered I ween
At Helen s breastie coost his gla e awa
Ca Eh, but suppose they lea e us altogether?
Ly O faddl l then we ll find some sub titute
Ca If they try force?
Ly They ll soon get tired of that
If keep firm. Sca t joy a husband gets
Who finds himself at disco d w th his w fe
Ca Well, then f so you wish it so w ll ha e it
La An our gude folk we se easily persuade
To keep the Peace w never a thocht o guile
B t your Athanian hairumscairum callants
Wha sall persuade *them* no to play the fule?
Ly O ll persuade our people ne er fear
La Not hile ye e gat thae gallies rigged sae trim,
An a that rowth o siller nigh the Goddess.[1]
Ly O but my dear we e tak n thought for that
This ery morn e seize the Acropolis.
Now whilst we e planning and con p ring here
The lder women ha e the task assigned them
Under pretence f sacrifice to se e it
La A will gae fi ly an ye talk like that
L Then hy n t Lampito t once comb e
All in one oath, and clen h the plot securely?
La Weel, you propound the aith n w se a tak t.
Ly Good now then, Scythianess, don t stand ther gaping
Q ck, set a great bla k shi ld here hollow upwards,
And b ing the sacrificial b ts.
Ca And how
Are we to swear Lysistrata?
Ly We'll slay
(Like those Seven Chiefs in Aeschylus) a lamb
Over a shield
Ca N y wh n our object s Peace
Don t use shi ld, Lysistrata, my dear
Ly Then hat hall be th oath?
Ca Could we not somehow
Get a grey mar nd cut her up to bits?
Ly Grey mare, indeed!
Ca Well, what s the oath will suit
U women best?
My I'll tell you what I think
Let s set a great black *cup* here hollow upwards
Then for a lamb we ll slay a Thasian wine jar
And firmly swear to—pour no water in
La Hech the braw aithl my certie hoo I like it
Ly O yes, bring out the wine jar and the cup
A maiden brings out a jar of wine a d an im mense cup
Ca La! here s a splendid piece of ware my dears.
Now that s a cup twill cheer one s heart to take.
Ly (*to the servant*) Set down the cup and take the ct m boar
O Queen Persuasion and O Loving Cup
Accept our offerings, and maintain our cause!
Ca 'T s jolly coloured blood and spirts out bra ely
La Ay an by Ca tor vera fragrant tool
My Let *me* swear first my sisters?
Ca Yes, if *you*
Draw the first lot not else by Aphrodite
Ly All place your hands upon the wine-cup so
O e speak the words, repeating after me
Then all the rest confirm it Now beg n
I will abstain from Love and Lo e s del ghts.
Ca *I will absta f om Lo e and Lo e s delights*
Ly And take no pleasure though my l rd in ites
Ca *A d t ke no pl asure though my lo d invites*
Ly And sl ep a est l all alo e at n ghts.
Ca *A d sleep a est l all alone at n ghts*
Ly A d h e a stra ger to all nuptial rites.
Ca *A d l e a stra ger to all uptial rit s*
I don t half like it though Lysistrata
Ly I w ll abjure the very name of Lo e
Ca *I will bj the very name f Love*
Ly So help me Zeus, and all the P wers above.
Ca *So help me Zeus and all the Po ers above*
Ly If I do th s, my cup be filled with wine.
Ca *If I d this my cup be filled with w ne*
Ly B t if I fa l, a water dra ght be m ne.
Ca *But f I fa l, a water dra ght b m e*
Ly Yo all swear this?
My O yes, my dear we do
Ly I ll now con ume these fragments.
LYS STRAT *takes the w ne-cup i her hand*
Ca Shares, my fr end
N w at first start ng let us show we re frie ds.
La Ha k! what s yon skirl n ?
A sound of perso s cheering is heard the d sta ce
Ly That s the thi g I said
Th y e set ed the Acropolis, Athene s castle
Ou c mrades have. Now Lampito be off
You go to Sparta and arran e thi g the e
Lea i u h re these girl as hostages.
And We will pass inside the castle walls,
And h lp the women th r to close the bars.
Ca But don t you think that very soon the Men
Will come, in arms, against us?
Ly Let th m come!
They will n t bring or threats or fire e ough
To awe our woman hearts, and make us open
These gates aga n, sa e on the terms we mentioned

[1] A reserv of thousand tale ts set asid for pressing emergency (Th cydides, ii. 24) It was now proposed (Thucydides, iii. 5) use this in building flee t replace the ships lost t Syracuse.
[2] Scythian ar hers were employed in Ath ns police the women have therefore Scythianess.

Ly Ah friend you ll find them Attic to the core
Always too late in every thing they do
Not even one woman from the coast has come
Not one from Salamis
Ca O they no doubt
Will cross this morning early in their boats
Ly And those I counted sure to come the first
My staunch Acharnian damsels they re not here—
Not they
Ca And yet Theagenes s wife
Consulted Hecate as if to come
Several women enter headed by MYRRHINA *from the village of Anagyrus*
Hi! but they re coming now here they all are
First one and then another Hoity toity!
Whence come all these?
Ly From Anagyre
Ca Aha!
We ve stirred up Anagyre at all events
Other women enter
Myrrhina Are we too late Lysistrata? Well?
What?
Why don t you speak?
Ly I m sorry Myrrhina
That you should come so late on such a business
My I scarce could find my girdle in the dark
But if the thing s so pressing tell us now
Ly No no let s wait a little till the women
Of Peloponnesus and Boeotia come
To join our congress
My O yes better so
And here good chance is Lampito approaching
LAMPITO *a Spartan woman enters accompanied by her friends*
Ly O welcome welcome Lampito my love
O the sweet girl! how hale and bright she looks!
Here s nerve! here s muscle! here s an arm could fairly
Throttle a bull!
Lampito Weel by the Twa [1] I think sae
An I can loup an fling an kick my hurdies
Ly See here s a neck and breast how firm and lusty!
La Wow but ye pradd me like a fatted calf
Ly And who s this other damsel? whence comes sh ?
La Ane deputation frae Boeoty comin
To sit amang you
Ly Ah from fair Boeotia
The land of plains!
Ca A very lovely land
Well cropped and trimmed and spruce with penny royal
Ly And who s the next?
La A bonnie burdie she
She s a Corinthian lassie
Ly Ay by Zeus
And so she is A bonnie lass indeed
La But wha ha ca ed thegither a thae thrangs
O wenches?
Ly I did
La Did ye noo? then tell us
What tis a for
Ly O yes my dear I will
My Ay surely tell us all this urgent business.
Ly O yes I ll tell you now but first I d ask you
One simple question
My Ask it dear and welcome
Ly Do ye not miss the fathers of your babes,
Always on service? well I wot ye all
Have got a husband absent at the wars
Ca Ay mine worse luck has been five months away
In Thracian quarters watching Eucrates
My *And mine s been stationed seven whol months at Pylus*
La An my gude mon nae suner comes frae war
Than he straps targe an g ngs awa again
Ly No husbands now no sparks no any thing
For ever since Miletus played us false
We ve had no joy no solace none at all
So will you will you if I find a way
Help me to end the war?
My Ay that we will
I will be sure though I d to fling me down
This mantling shawl and have a bout of—drinking
Ca And I would cleave my very self in twain
Like a cleft turbot and give half for Peace
La An I to glint at Peace again wad speel
Up to the tap rig o Taygety
Ly I ll tell you now tis meet ye all should know
O ladies! sisters! if we really mean
To make the men make Peace there s but one way
We must abstain—
My Well! tell us
Ly Will ye do it?
My Do it? ay surely though it cost our lives.
Ly We must abstain—each—from the joys of Love
How! what! why turn away? where are ye going?
What makes you pout your lips and shake your heads?
What brings this falling tear that changing colour?
Will ye or will ye not? What mean ye eh?
My I ll never do it Let the war go on
Ca Zeus! nor I either Let the war go on
Ly You too Miss Turbot? you who said just now
You d cleave for Peace your very self in twain?
Ca Ask anything but this Why it needs be
I d walk through fire only not give up Love
There s nothing like it dear Lysistrata
Ly And what say you?
My I d liefer walk through fire.
Ly O women! women! O our frail frail sex!
No wonder tragedies are made from us
Always the same nothing but loves and cradles
O friend! O Lampito! if you and I
Are of one mind we yet may pull things through
Won t *you* vote with me dear?
La Haith by the Twa
'Tis sair to bide your lane withouten men

Ly O dearest friend, my one true friend of all.
Ca Well, but suppose we do the things you say,
Pray Heaven avert it, but put case we do,
Shall we be nearer Peace?
Ly Much, much, much nearer.
For if we women will but sit at home,
Powdered and trimmed, clad in our daintiest lawn,
Employing all our charms, and all our arts
To win men's love, and when we've won it, then
Repel them, firmly, till they end the war,
We'll soon get Peace again, be sure of that.
La Sae Menelaus, when he glowered, I ween,
At Helen's bare bosie, coost his glaive awa.
Ca Eh, but suppose they leave us altogether?
Ly O faddle! then we'll find some substitute.
Ca If they try force?
Ly They'll soon get tired of that
If we keep firm. Scant joy a husband gets
Who finds himself at discord with his wife.
Ca Well, then, if so you wish it, so we'll have it.
La An our gude folk we se easily persuade
To keep the Peace wi' never a thocht o' guile:
But your Athanian harum-scarum callant
Wha sall persuade *them* no to play the fule?
Ly O we'll persuade our people, never fear.
La Not while ye've gat thae gallies rigged sae trim,
And that rowth o' siller nigh the Goddess.[1]
Ly O but, my dear, we've taken thought for that:
This very morn we seize the Acropolis.
Now whilst we're planning and conspiring here,
The elder women have the task assigned them,
Under pretence of sacrifice, to seize it.
La A' will gae fairely an ye talk like that.
Ly Then why not, Lampito, at once combine
All in one oath, and clinch the plot securely?
La Weel, you propound the aith, an' we sall a' tak it.
Ly Good; now then, Scythianess,[2] don't stand there gaping.
Quick, set a great black shield here, hollow upwards,
And bring the sacrificial bits.
Ca And how
Are we to swear, Lysistrata?
Ly We'll slay
(Like those Seven Chiefs in Aeschylus) a lamb
Over a shield.
Ca Nay, when our object's Peace,
Don't use a shield, Lysistrata, my dear.
Ly Then what shall be the oath?
Ca Could we not somehow
Get a grey mare and cut her up to bits?
Ly Grey mare, indeed!
Ca Well, what's the oath will suit
Us women best?
My I'll tell you what I think.
Let's set a great black *cup* here, hollow upwards;
Then for a lamb we'll slay a Thasian wine-jar,
And firmly swear to—pour no water in.
La Hech, the braw aith! my certie, hoo I like it.
Ly O yes, bring out the wine-jar and the cup.
A maiden brings out a jar of wine and an immense cup
Ca La! here's a splendid piece of ware, my dears.
Now that's a cup 'twill cheer one's heart to take.
Ly (*to the servant*) Set down the cup, and take the victim boar.
O Queen Persuasion, and O Loving Cup,
Accept our offerings, and maintain our cause!
Ca 'Tis jolly coloured blood, and spirts out bravely.
La Ay, an' by Castor, vera fragrant too!
My Let *me* swear first, my sisters?
Ca Yes, if you
Draw the first lot; not else, by Aphrodite.
Ly All place your hand upon the wine-cup: so.
One speak the words, repeating after me:
Then all the rest confirm it. Now begin.
I will abstain from Love and Love's delights.
Ca *I will abstain from Love and Love's delights.*
Ly And take no pleasure though my lord invites.
Ca *And take no pleasure though my lord invites.*
Ly And sleep a vestal all alone at nights.
Ca *And sleep a vestal all alone at nights.*
Ly And live a stranger to all nuptial rites.
Ca *And live a stranger to all nuptial rites.*
I don't half like it though, Lysistrata.
Ly I will abjure the very name of Love.
Ca *I will abjure the very name of Love.*
Ly So help me Zeus, and all the Powers above.
Ca *So help me Zeus, and all the Powers above.*
Ly If I do this, my cup be filled with wine.
Ca *If I do this, my cup be filled with wine.*
Ly But if I fail, a watered draught be mine.
Ca *But if I fail, a watered draught be mine.*
Ly You all swear this?
My O yes, my dear, we do.
Ly I'll now consume these fragments.
LYSISTRATA *takes the wine-cup in her hand*
Ca Shares, my friend,
Now at first starting let us show we're friends.
La Hark! what's yon skirlin'?
A sound of persons cheering is heard in the distance
Ly That's the thing I said:
They've seized the Acropolis, Athene's castle,
Our comrades have. Now, Lampito, be off:
You, go to Sparta, and arrange things there,
Leaving us here these girls as hostages.
And we will pass inside the castle walls,
And help the women there to close the bars.
Ca But don't you think that very soon the Men
Will come in arms against us?
Ly Let them come!
They will not bring or threats or fire enough
To awe our woman hearts, and make us open
These gates again, save on the terms we mentioned.

[1] A reserve of a thousand talents set aside for a pressing emergency (Thucydides, ii. 24). It was now proposed (Thucydides, viii. 15) to use this in building a fleet to replace the ships lost at Syracuse.

[2] Scythian archers were employed at Athens as police; the women have therefore Scythianess.

Ca By Aphrodite no! else twere for nought
That people call us bold resistless jades

The crowd now disperses LAMPITO *leaving for her homeward journey and the others disappearing through the gates of the Propylaea After a pause the* CHORUS OF MEN *are seen slowly approaching from the Lower City They are carrying heavy logs of firewood and a jar of lighted cinders and as they move they sing their entrance song*

Chorus of Men

On sure and slow my Draces go
though that great log you re bringing
of olive green is sore, I ween
your poor old shoulder wringing
O dear how many things in life
belie one s expectations!
Since who d have thought, my Strymodore
that these abominations
Who would have thought that sluts like these
Our household pests would have waxed so bold
As the Holy Image by fraud to seize
As the City Castle by force to hold
With block and bolt and barrier vast
Making the Propylaea fast
Press on Philurgus towards the heights
we ll pile a great amazing
Array of logs around the walls
and set them all a blazing
And as for these conspirators
a bonfire huge we ll make them
One vote shall doom the whole to death
one funeral pyre shall take them
And thus we ll burn the brood accurst
but Lycon s wife we ll burn the first
No never never whilst I live
shall woman folk deride me
Not scatheless went Cleomenes
when he like this defied me
And dared my castle to seize yet He
A Spartan breathing contempt and pride
Full soon surrendered his arms to me
And a scanty coat round his loins he tied
And with unwashed limbs and with unkempt head
And with six years dirt the intruder fled
So strict and stern a watch around
my mates and I were keeping
In seventeen rows of serried shields
before the fortress sleeping
And *these* whom both Euripides
and all the Powers on high
Alike detest shall these shall these
my manly rage defy?
Then never be my Trophy shown
on those red plains of Marathon!
But over this snubby protruding steep
Ere we reach our goal at the Castle keep
We ve still with our burdensome load to creep
And how to manage that blunt incline
Without a donkey I can t divine
Dear how these two great firelogs make
my wearied shoulders toil and ache
But still right onward we needs must go
And still the cinders we needs must blow
Else we ll find the fire extinguished
ere we reach our journey s end
Puff! Puff! Puff!
O the smoke! the smoke!

O royal Heracles! what a lot
Of fire came raging out of the pot
And flew like a dog at my eyes red hot
Twas a jet from the Lemnian mines I ween
It came so fierce and it bit so keen
And worried with persistence sore
my two poor eyes inflamed before
On Laches on! to the castle press
And aid the God in her dire distress
Surely if we e er would help her
now s the very time my friend
Puff! Puff! Puff!
O the smoke! the smoke!
Thank heaven the fire is still alight
and burning beautifully bright
So here we ll lay our burdens down
with eager hearts delighted
And dip the vine torch in the pot
and get it there ignited
Then all together at the gates
like battering rams we ll butt
And if our summons they reject
and keep the barriers shut
We ll burn the very doors with fire
and them with smoke we'll smother
So lay the burdens down Pheugh! Pheugh!
O how this smoke does bother!
What general from the Samian lines
an active hand will lend us?
Well well I m glad my back is freed
from all that weight tremendous
O pot tis now your turn to help
O send a livelier jet
Of flame this way that I to day
the earliest light may get
O Victory immortal Queen
assist us Thou in rearin
A trophy o er these woman hosts
so bold and domineerin

During the last few lines the MEN *have been completing their preparations and the air above them is now growing lurid with the smoke and flame of their torches As the* MEN *relapse into silence the voices of the* CHORUS OF WOMEN *are heard in the distance They come sweeping round from the north side of the Acropolis carrying their pitchers of water and singing in turn their entrance song The two* CHORUSES *are for the present concealed from each other by the north western angle of the Acropolis*

3 Fi

Chorus of Women

L... up in the sky
the flames are beginning to flicker
Smoke and vapour of fire!
come quicker my friends, come quicker
F... Nicodice fly
Else will Calyce burn,
Else Critylla will die
Slain by the laws so stern
Slain by the old men's hate
...but I fear! I fear!
can it chance that I come too late?
Truly it was, forsooth, before my jug I could fill,
in the dusk of the morn,
at the spring by the side of the hill
What with the clatter of pitchers,
The noise and press of the throng,
Jostling with knaves and slaves,
Till at last I snatched it along
Abundance of water supplying
To friends who are burning and dying

Yea, for hither, they state
Dotards are dragging to burn us,
Logs of enormous weight
Fit for a bath room furnace,
Vowing to roast and to slay
Sure the reprobate women
O Lady, O Goddess, I pray
Never may I see them in flames!
I hope to behold them with gladness,
Hellas and Athens redeem
from battle and murder and madness.
This is the cause why they venture,
Lady thy mansion to hold
Tritogeneia,[1] Eternal
Champion with helmet of gold!
And O if with fire men invade them,
O help us with water to aid them.

At this juncture CHORUS OF WOMEN *heel round the corner of the Acropolis and the two* CHORUSES *suddenly meet face to face*

Stop easy all! what have we here?
(*To the men*) You vile abandoned crew
No good and virtuous men, I'm sure
would act in the way you do.

M Ch. Hey here an unexpected sight!
here here's a demonstration!
A swarm of women issuing out
with warlike preparation!

W Ch. Hallo, you seem a little moved!
does this one troop affright you?
You see not yet the myriadth part
of those prepared to fight you.

M Ch. Now really Phaedrias, shall we stop
to hear such odious treason?
Let's break our sticks about their backs,
let's beat the jades to reason.

W Ch. Hi, sisters, set the pitchers down
and then they won't embarrass
Our nimble fingers, if the rogues
attempt our ranks to harass.

M Ch. I warrant, now if twice or thrice
we slap their faces neatly
That they will learn, like Bupalus,
to hold their tongues discreetly.

W Ch. Well, here's my face I won't draw back
now slap it if you dare
And I won't leave one ounce of you
for other dogs to tear

M Ch. Keep still, or else your musty Age
to very shreds I'll batter

W Ch. Now only touch Stratyllis, sir
just lift one finger at her!

M Ch. And what if with these fists my love
I pound the wench to shivers?

W Ch. By Heaven we'll gnaw your entrails out
and rip away your livers.

M Ch. There is not than Euripides
a bard more wise and knowing
For women are a shameless set
the vilest creatures going

W Ch. Pick up again Rhodippe dear
your jug with water brimming

M Ch. What made you bring that water here,
you God-detested women?

W Ch. What made you bring that light, old Tomb?
to set yourselves afire?

M Ch. No, but to kindle for your friends
a mighty funeral pyre.

W Ch. Well, then we brought this water here
to put your bonfire out sirs.

M Ch. You put our bonfire out indeed!

W Ch. You'll see beyond a doubt sirs.

M Ch. I swear that with this torch, offhand
I've half a mind to fry you.

W Ch. Got any soap my lad? if so,
bath I'll soon supply you.

M Ch. A bath for *me* you mouldy hag!

W Ch. And that a bride bath too.

M Ch. Zounds, did you hear her impudence?

W Ch. Am I not freeborn as you?

M Ch. I'll quickly put a stop to this.

W Ch. You'll judge no more I vow!

M Ch. Hi! set the vixen's hair on fire

W Ch. Now Achelous,[2] now!

M Ch. Good gracious!

W Ch. What! you find it hot?

M Ch. Hot? murder! stop! be quiet!

W Ch. I'm watering you to make you grow

M Ch. I wither up from shivering so.

W Ch. I tell you what a fire you've got
So warm your members by it.

At this crisis the tum... it is stayed for an instant by the appearance on the stage of a very official personage one of the MAGISTRATES *who, after the Sicilian catastrophe, were appointed under the name of Probuli to form a Directory*

[1] Athena.

[2] Denotes water

Ca By Aphrodite no! else twere for nought
That people call us bold resistless jades

The crowd now disperses LAMPITO *leaving for her homeward journey and the others disappearing through the gates of the Propylaea After a pause the* CHORUS OF MEN *are seen slowly approaching from the Lower City They are carrying heavy logs of firewood and a jar of lighted cinders and as they move they sing their entrance song*

Chorus of Men

On sure and slow my Draces go
though that great log you re bringing
of olive green is sore I ween
your poor old shoulder wringing
O dear how many things in life
belie one s expectations!
Since who d have thought my Strymodore
that these abominations
Who would have thought that sluts like these
Our household pests would have waxed so bold
As the Holy Image by fraud to seize
As the City Castle by force to hold
With block and bolt and barrier vast
Making the Propylaea fast
Press on Philurgus towards the heights
we ll pile a great amazing
Array of logs around the walls
and set them all a blazing
And as for these conspirators
a bonfire huge we ll make them
One vote shall doom the whole to death
one funeral pyre shall take them
And thus we ll burn the brood accurst
but Lycon s wife we ll burn the first
No never never whilst I live
shall woman folk deride me
Not scatheless went Cleomenes
when he like this defied me
And dared my castle to seize yet He
A Spartan breathing contempt and pride
Full soon surrendered his arms to me
And a scanty coat round his loins he tied
And with unwashed limbs and with unkempt head
And with six years dirt the intruder fled
So strict and stern a watch around
my mates and I were keeping
In seventeen rows of serried shields
before the fortress sleeping
And *these* whom both Euripides
and all the Powers on high
Alike detest shall these shall these
my manly rage defy?
Then never be my Trophy shown
on those red plains of Marathon!
But over this snubby protruding steep
Ere we reach our goal at the Castle keep
We ve still with our burdensome load to creep
And how to manage that blunt incline
Without a donkey I can t divine
Dear how these two great firelogs make
my wearied shoulders toil and ach
But still right onward we needs must go
And still the cinders we needs must blow
Else we ll find the fire extinguished
ere we reach our journey s en
Puff! Puff! Puff!
O the smoke! the smoke!

O royal Heracles! what a lot
Of fire came raging out of the pot
And flew like a dog at my eyes red hot
Twas a jet from the Lemnian mines I ween
It came so fierce and it bit so keen
And worried with persistence sore
my two poor eyes inflamed befor
On Laches on! to the castle press
And aid the God in her dire distress
Surely if we e er would help her
now s the very time my frienc
Puff! Puff! Puff!
O the smoke! the smoke!
Thank heaven the fire is still alight
and burning beautifully bright
So here we ll lay our burdens down
with eager hearts delighted
And dip the vine torch in the pot
and get it there ignited
Then all together at the gates
like battering rams we ll butt
And if our summons they reject
and keep the barriers shut
We ll burn the very doors with fire
and them with smoke we ll smother
So lay the burdens down Pheugh! Pheugh!
O how this smoke does bother
What general from the Samian lines
an active hand will lend us?
Well well I m glad my back is freed
from all that weight tremendous
O pot tis now your turn to help
O send a livelier jet
Of flame this way that I to-day
the earliest light may get
O Victory immortal Queen
assist us Thou in rearin
A trophy o er these woman hosts
so bold and domineering

During the last few lines the MEN *have been completing their preparations and the air above them is now growing lurid with the smoke and flame of their torches As the* MEN *relapse into silence the voices of the* CHORUS OF WOMEN *are heard in the distance They come sweeping round from the north side of the Acropolis carrying their pitchers of water and singing in turn their entrance song The two* CHORUSES *are for the present concealed from each other by th north western angle of the Acropolis*

Chorus of Women

P... r ..., in the sky
the flames are beginning to flicker
Smoke and vapour f fire!
come quick r my friends, come quicker
Fly Nicodice fly
Else will Caly burn
Else Crit lla will d e
Slain by the la s so st rn
Slain by th old men s hate
... b t I fear! I fear!
can it chance that I come too late?
Trouble t was, forsooth before my ju I could
fill,
All in the dusk of the morn
at the spri by the side of the hill
What with the clatter of pitchers,
The noise and press f the thron
Jostu , with kna es and slaves,
Till at last I snatched it along
Abundance f water suppl n
T friends who are burnin and dyin

Yet, for hither they state
Dotards are dragging to burn us,
Logs of enormous weight,
Fit for a bath oom furnace,
Vowing to roast and to slay
Sternly the reprobate women
O Lady O Goddess, I pray
Ne er may I see them in flames!
I hope t behold them with gladness,
H...s nd Athens[1] red m g
from battle and murder and madness.
This is th cause why they enture,
Lad thy mansions to hold
T ogeneia, Et mal
Champion th helm t of gold!
And O if with fir men in ade them
O help us th water t id th m
At th j ncture c s r wom u heel round the corner f th Acropol s d th two CHOR *eses suddenly meet f ce to face*

S op! easy all! what have we h e?
(T *the* ME) Yo il band ned crew
No good and virtuous men, I m s e
would act in the way you do.
M Ch. Hey here s an une pected sight!
hev h e s a demonstration!
A swarm of women issu g o t
w th wa like preparation!
W Ch. Hallo, you seem little moved!
does this e troop affri ht you?
You see not yet the myriadth part
of those pr pared to fight you
M Ch. Now really Phaedrias, hall w t p
to hear such od ous treason?
Let break our sticks about their ba ks,
let s beat th j des to reason.

[1] Athena.

W Ch Hi, sisters, set the pitchers down
and then they won t embarrass
Our nimble fingers, if the rogues
attempt our ranks to harass.
M Ch I warrant, now if twice or thrice
we slap their faces neatly
That they will learn like Bupalus,
to hold their tongues discreetly
W Ch Well, here s my face I won t draw back
now slap it if you dare
And I won t leave one ounce of you
for other dogs to tear
M Ch Keep still or else your musty Age
to very shreds I ll batter
W Ch. No only touch Stratyllis, sir
just lift one finger at her!
M Ch And what if with these fists, my lo e,
I pound the wench to shi ers?
W Ch By Heaven we ll gnaw your entrails out
and rip away your livers.
M Ch There is not than Euripides
a bard more wise and knowing
For women *are* a sham less set
the vilest creatu es going
W Ch Prck up again Rhod ppe dear
your jug with water brimming
M Ch What made you bring that water here
you God-detested women?
W Ch What mad you brin that I ght old Tomb?
to set *yourselves* fire?
M Ch No, but to kindle fo your friend
a mighty funeral pyre.
W Ch Well then we brought this water here
to put your bonfire out sirs.
M Ch *You* put our bonfire out indeed!
W Ch You ll see beyo d a doubt sirs.
M Ch I swear that with this torch offhand
I ve half a mind to fry you.
W Ch G t any soap my lad? f so,
a bath I ll soon supply you.
M Ch A bath for *me* you mouldy hag!
W Ch And that a bride bath too
M Ch Zounds, did you hear her impudence?
W Ch Ain t I f eeborn s you?
M Ch I ll qu ckly put stop to this.
W Ch You ll judg no mor I owl
M Ch Hi! set the axen s hair on fire
W Ch Now Achelous,[2] now!
M Ch Good gracious!
W Ch What! you find it hot?
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W Ch I m watering you to make you grow
M Ch I wither p from shivering so
W Ch I tell y u what a fi e y u e ot
So warm you m mbers by it
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[2] Denotes water

or Committee of Public Safety He is attended by four Scythian archers part of the ordinary police of the Athenian Republic The WOMEN *retire into the background*

Magistrate Has then the women s wantonness blazed out
Their constant timbrels and Sabaziuses
And that Adonis dirge upon the roof
Which once I heard in full Assembly time
Twas when Demostratus (beshrew him) moved
To sail to Sicily and from the roof
A woman dancing shrieked Woe woe Adonis!
And *he* proposed to enrol Zacynthian hoplites
And *she* upon the roof the maudlin woman
Cried Wail Adonis! yet he forced it through
That God-detested vile Ill temprian
Such are the wanton follies of the sex

M Ch What if you heard their insolence to day
Their vile outrageous goings on? And look
See how they ve drenched and soused us from their pitchers
Till we can wring out water from our clothes

Ma Ay by Poseidon and it serves us right
Tis all our fault they ll never know their place
These pampered women whilst we spoil them so
Hear how we talk in every workman s shop
Goldsmith says one this necklace that you made
My gay young wife was dancing yester eve
And lost sweet soul the fastening of the clasp
Do please reset it Goldsmith Or again
O Shoemaker my wife s new sandal pinches
Her little toe the tender delicate child
Make it fit easier please Hence all this nonsense!
Yea things have reached a pretty pass indeed
When I the State s Director wanting money
To purchase oar blades find the Treasury gates
Shut in my face by these preposterous women
Nay but no dallying now bring up the crowbars
And I ll soon stop *your* insolence my dears

He turns to the Scythians who instead of setting to work are poking idly around them

What! gaping fool? and *you* can *you* do nothing
But stare about with tavern squinting eye?
Push in the crowbars underneath the gates
You stand that side and heave them I ll stop here
And heave them here

The gates are thrown open and LYSISTRATA *comes out*

Ly O let your crowbars be
Lo I come out unfetched! What need of crowbars?
Tis wits not crowbars that ye need to day

Ma Ay truly traitress say you so? Here Archer!
Arrest her tie her hands behind her back

Ly And if he touch me with his finger tip
The public scum! fore Artemis he ll rue it

Ma What man afeared? why catch her round the waist
And *you* go with him quick and bind her fast

Ca (*coming out*) And if you do but lay one hand upon her
Fore Pandrosus I ll stamp your vitals out

Ma Vitals ye hag? Another Archer ho!
Seize this one first because she chatters so

My (*coming out*) And if you touch her with your finger tip
Fore Phosphorus you ll need a cupping shortly

Ma Tchat what s all this? lay hold of this one Archer!
I ll stop this sallying out depend upon it

Stratyllis And if he touch her fore the Queen of Tauris
I ll pull his squealing hairs out one by one

Ma O dear! all s up! I ve never an archer left
Nay but I swear we won t be done by women
Come Scythians close your ranks and all together
Charge!

Ly Charge away my hearties and you ll soon
Know that we ve here impatient for the fight
Four woman squadrons armed from top to toe

Ma Attack them Scythians twist their hands behind them

Ly Forth to the fray dear sisters bold allies!
O egg and seed and potherb market girls
O garlic selling barmaid baking girls
Charge to the rescue smack and whack and thwack them
Slang them I say show them what jades ye be

The WOMEN *come forward After a short struggle the archers are routed*

Fall back! retire! forbear to strip the slain

Ma Hillo! my archers got the worst of that

Ly What did the fool expect? Was it to fight
With *slaves* you came? Think you we Women feel
No thirst for glory?

Ma Thirst enough I trow
No doubt of that when there s a tavern handy

M Ch O thou who wastest many words Director of this nation
Why wilt thou with such brutes as these thus hold negotiation?
Dost thou not see the bath wherewith the sluts have dared to lave me
Whilst all my clothes were on and ne er a bit of soap they gave me?

W Ch For tis not right nor yet polite to strike a harmless neighbour
And if you do tis needful too that she your eyes belabour
Full fain would I a maiden shy in maiden peace be resting
Not making here the slightest stir nor any soul molesting
Unless indeed some rogue should strive to rifle and despoil my hive

M Ch O how shall we treat Lord Zeus such creatures as these?
Let us ask the cause for which they have dared to seize
To seize this fortress of ancient and high renown
This shrine where never a foot profane hath trod
The lofty rocked inaccessible Cranaan town
The holy Temple of God

Now to examine them closely and narrowly
probing them here and sounding them there
Since if we fail to complete! unravel the
intricate web of this tangled affair
Ma. Foremost and first I would wish to inquire of
them, what is this silly disturbance about?
Why have ye ventured to seize the Acropolis,
locking the gates and barring us out?

The field is now open for a summons of hostili ties, and a parley takes place between the leaders of the two contending factions.

Ly. Keeping the silver securely in custody
lest for its sake ye continue the war
M. What, is the war for the sake of the silver
then?
Ly. Yes and all other disputes that there are.
Why is Peisander forever embroiling us,
why do the rest of our officers feel
always a pleasure in strife and disturbances?
Simply to gain an occasion to steal.
So, as they please for the future the treasury
never a penny shall yield them, I vow
Ma. How may I ask, will you hinder their getting
it?
Ly. We will ourselves be the Treasurers now
Ma. You, woman, you be the treasurers?
Ly. Certainly
Ah, you esteem us unable, perchance!
Are we not skilled in domestic economy
do we not manage the household finance?
Ma. O, that is different.
L. Why is it different?
Ma. This is required for the fighting my dear
Ly. Well, but the fighting itself isn't requisite.
Ma. Only without it, we're ruined, I fear
Ly. We will deliver you.
Ma. You will deliver us!
Ly. Truly we will.
Ma. What capital notion!
Ly. Whether you like it or not, we'll deliver you.
Ma. Impudent hussy!
Ly. You seem in commotion.
Nevertheless we will do as we promise you.
Ma. That were a terrible shame, by Demeter
L. Friend, we must save you.
Ma. But how if I wish it not?
Ly. That will but make our resolve the completer
Ma. Fools! what on earth can possess you to
meddle with
matters of war and matters of peace?
Ly. Well, I will tell you the reason.
Ma. And speedily
else you will rue it.
Ly. Then listen and cease
Clutching and clenching your fingers so angrily
keep yourself peaceable.
Ma. Hanged if I can
Such the rage that I feel at your impudence.
St. Then it is you that will rue it, my man.
Ma. Croak your own fate you ill-omened antiquity

(*To* LYSISTRATA) *You* be the spokeswoman, lady
Ly. I will.
Think of our old moderation and gentleness,
think how we bore with your pranks, and were still,
All through the days of our former pugnacity
all through the war that is over and spent
Not that (be sure) we approved of your policy
never our griefs you allowed us to vent.
Well we perceived your mistakes and mismanage
ment
Often at home on our housekeeping cares,
Often we heard of some foolish proposal you
made for conducting the public affairs.
Then would we question you mildly and pleasantly
inwardly grieving but outwardly gay
"Husband how goes it abroad?" we would ask of
him
"what have ye done in Assembly to-day?"
What would ye write on the side of the Treaty
stone?"
Husband says angrily "What's that to you?
You hold your tongue!" And I held it accordingly
St. That is a thing which I never would do!
Ma. Ma'am, if you hadn't you'd soon have
repented it.
Ly. Therefore I held it and spake not a word.
Soon of another tremendous absurdity
wilder and worse than the former we heard.
"Husband I say with a tender solicitude,
Why have we passed such a foolish decree?"
Viciously, moodily glaring askance at me,
"Stick to your spinning my mistress," says he
"Else you will speedily find it the worse for you,
War is the care and the business of men!"
Ma. Zeus! 'twas a worthy reply and an excellent!
Ly. What! you unfortunate shall we not then,
Then, when we see you perplexed and incompetent
shall we not tender advice to the State?
So when aloud in the streets and the thoroughfares
sadly we heard you bewailing of late,
'Is there a Man to defend and deliver us
No," says another "there's none in the land
Then by the Women assembled in conference
jointly great Revolution was planned
Hellas to save from her grief and perplexity
Where is the use of a longer delay?
Shift for the future our parts and our characters
you, as the women in silence obey
We as the men, will harangue and provide for you
then shall the State be triumphant again,
Then shall we do what is best for the citizens.
Ma. Women to do what is best for the men!
That were a shameful reproach and unbearable!
Ly. Silence old gentleman.
M. Silence for *you*?
Stop for a wench with a wimple enfolding her?
No, by the Powers, may I *die* if I do!
Ly. Do not my pretty one, do not I pray
Suffer my wimple to stand in the way
Here take it and wear it and gracefully tie it,
Enfolding it over your head, and be quiet.
Now to your task.

Ca Here is an excellent spindle to pull
My Here is a basket for carding the wool
Ly Now to your task
Haricots chawing up petticoats drawing up
Off to your carding your combing your trimming
War is the care and the business of women
During the foregoing lines the WOMEN *have been arraying the* MAGISTRATE *in the garb and with the apparatus of a spinning woman just as in the corresponding system below they bedeck him in the habiliments of a corpse*
W Ch Up up and leave the pitchers there
and on resolved and eager
Our own allotted part to bear
in this illustrious leaguer

I will dance with resolute tireless feet all day
My limbs shall never grow faint my strength give way
I will march all lengths with the noble hearts and the true
For theirs is the ready wit and the patriot hand
And womanly grace and courage to dare and do
And Love of our own bright land

Children of stiff and intractable grandmothers
heirs of the stinging viragoes that bore you
On with an eager unyielding tenacity wind in your sails and the haven before you
Ly Only let Love the entrancing the fanciful
only let Queen Aphrodite to day
Breathe on our persons a charm and a tenderness
lend us their own irresistible sway
Drawing the men to admire us and long for us
then shall the war everlastingly cease
Then shall the people revere us and honour us
givers of Joy and givers of Peace
Ma Tell us the mode and the means of your doing it
Ly First we will stop the disorderly crew
Soldiers in arms promenading and marketing
St Yea by divine Aphrodite tis true
Ly Now in the market you see them like Corybants
jangling about with their armour of mail
Fiercely they stalk in the midst of the crockery
sternly parade by the cabbage and kail
Ma Right for a soldier should always be soldierly!
Ly Troth tis a mighty ridiculous jest
Watching them haggle for shrimps in the market place
grimly accoutred with shield and with crest
St Lately I witnessed a captain of cavalry
proudly the while on his charger he sat
Witnessed him soldierly buying an omelet
stowing it all in his cavalry hat
Comes like a Tereus a Thracian irregular
shaking his dart and his target to boot
Off runs a shop girl appalled at the sight of him
down he sits soldierly gobbles her fruit
Ma You I presume could adroitly and gingerly
settle this intricate tangled concern
You in a trice could relieve our perplexities
Ly Certainly
Ma How? permit me to learn
Ly Just as a woman with nimble dexterity
thus with her hands disentangles a skein
Hither and thither her spindles unravel it
drawing it out, and pulling it plain
So would this weary Hellenic entanglement
soon be resolved by our womanly care
So would our embassies neatly unravel it
drawing it here and pulling it there
Ma Wonderful marvellous feats not a doubt of it
you with your skeins and your spindles can show
Fools! do you really expect to unravel a
terrible war like a bundle of tow?
Ly Ah if you only could manage your politics
just in the way that we deal with a fleece!
Ma Tell us the recipe
Ly First in the washing tub
plunge it and scour it and cleanse it from grease
Purging away all the filth and the nastiness
then on the table expand it and lay
Beating out all that is worthless and mischievous
picking the burrs and the thistles away
Next for the clubs the cabals and the coteries
banding unrighteously office to win
Treat them as clots in the wool and dissever them
lopping the heads that are forming therein
Then you should card it and comb it and mingle it
all in one Basket of love and of unity
Citizens, visitors strangers and sojourners
all the entire undivided community
Know you a fellow in debt to the Treasury?
Mingle him merrily in with the rest
Also remember the cities our colonies
outlying states in the east and the west
Scattered about to a distance surrounding us
these are our shreds and our fragments of wool
These to one mighty political aggregate
tenderly carefully gather and pull
Twining them all in one thread of good fellowship
thence a magnificent bobbin to spin
Weaving a garment of comfort and dignity
worthily wrapping the People therein
Ma Heard any ever the like of their impudence
these who have nothing to do with the war
Preaching of bobbins and beatings and washing tubs?
Ly Nothing to do with it wretch that you are!
We are the people who feel it the keenliest
doubly on us the affliction is cast
Where are the sons that we sent to your battle fields?
Ma Silence! a truce to the ills that are past
Ly Then in the glory and grace of our womanhood
all in the May and the morning of life
Lo we are sitting forlorn and disconsolate
what has a soldier to do with a wife?
We might endure it but ah! for the younger ones
still in their maiden apartments they stay
Waiting the husband that never approaches them
watching the years that are gliding away

MA. Men, I suppose, have their youth everlastingly
LY. Nay, but it isn't the same with a man
Grey though he be when he comes from the battle-
field, still if he wishes to marry he can
But the spring and the flower of our womanhood
once let it slip, and it comes not again
[illegible] we may with our spells and our auguries,
never a husband will marry us then
M. Truly whoever is able to wed—
LY. Truly old fellow, 'tis time you were dead
So a pyre shall be bought and an urn shall be
bought,
And I'll bake you and make you a funeral
cake.
Take it and go.
CA. Here are the fillets all ready to wear
My. Here is the chaplet to bind in your hair
Ly. Take it and go.
What are you prating for?
What are you waiting for?
Charon is staying, delaying his crew
Charon is ca[illegible] and bawling for you.
[illegible] See, here's an outrage! here['s] scandalous
shame!
[illegible] and show me fellow magistrates
The woeful, horrid, dismal plight I'm in.
LY. Grumbl[ing] because we have not laid you
out
W[ait] for three days, and then with dawn will come,
[illegible] good time, the third-day funeral rites.

The MAGISTRATE retires off to his grave-clothes to renew [illegible] and exhibit the treatment he has received. LYSISTRATA and her friends withdraw into the Acropolis. The two CHORUSES remain without and relieve the tedium of the scene with a little banter.

M. Ch. This is no[t a] time for a[illegible]
now let all [illegible] bold and free.
[illegible] to meet [illegible] occasion.
[illegible] our rights with me.
[illegible]
Tide of Revol[ution] rising
Oder [illegible] folk down.

H[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
in the house of Cleis[thenes].
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

And I'll dress my sword in myrtle,
and with firm and dauntless hand
Here beside Aristogeiton resolutely take my stand
Marketing in arms beside him
This the time and this the place
When my patriot arm must deal a
—blow upon that woman's face
W. Ch. Ah, your mother shall not know you
impudent! when home you go
Strip my sisters, strip for action
on the ground your garments throw
Right it is that I my slender
Tribute to the state should render
I who to her thoughtful tender
care my happiest memories owe [1]
Bore at seven, the mystic casket
Was, at ten, our Lady's miller
then the yellow Brauron bear
Next (a maiden tall and stately
with a string of figs to wear)
Bore in pomp the holy Basket.
Well may such a gracious City
all my filial duty claim.
What though I was born a woman,
comrades, count it not for blame
If I bring the wiser counsels
I an equal share confer
Towards the common stock of Athens,
I contribute men to her
But the noble contribution,
but the olden tribute pay
Which your fathers' fathers left you,
relic of the Median fray
Dotards, ye have lost and wasted!
nothing in its stead ye bring
Nay ourselves ye're like to ruin,
spend and waste by blundering
Murmuring are ye? Let me hear you,
only let me hear you speak,
And from this unpolished slipper
comes a—slap upon your cheek!
M. Ch. Is not this an outrage sore?
And methinks it grows not o'er
But increases more and more.
Come, my comrades, hale and hearty
on the ground your mantles throw
In the odour of their manhood
men to meet the foe should go,
Not in these ungodly wrappers
swaddled up from top to toe.
On, then on, my white-foot veterans,
ye who thronged Leipsydrium's height
In the days when ye were Men!
Shake, t[h]is chill old Age from off you,
Spread the wings of youth again.
O these women! give them once
handle howsoever small,
And they'll soon be brought behind us
in the manliest feats of all.

[1] These were the duties of the four girls, between the ages of seven and eleven, chosen yearly to serve Athena.

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My Here is a basket for carding the wool
Ly Now to your task

Haricots chawing up petticoats drawing up
Off to your carding your combing your
trimming
War is the care and the business of women

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W Ch Up up and leave the pitchers there
and on resolved and eager
Our own allotted part to bear
in this illustrious leaguer

I will dance with resolute tireless feet all day
My limbs shall never grow faint my strength give
way
I will march all lengths with the noble hearts and
the true
For theirs is the ready wit and the patriot hand
And womanly grace and courage to dare and do
And Love of our own bright land

Children of stiff and intractable grandmothers
heirs of the stinging viragoes that bore you
On with an eager unyielding tenacity wind in your
sails and the haven before you

Ly Only let Love the entrancing the fanciful
only let Queen Aphrodite to day
Breathe on our persons a charm and a tenderness
lend us their own irresistible sway
Drawing the men to admire us and long for us
then shall the war everlastingly cease
Then shall the people revere us and honour us
givers of Joy and givers of Peace
Ma Tell us the mode and the means of your doing it
Ly First we will stop the disorderly crew
Soldiers in arms promenading and marketing
St Yea by divine Aphrodite tis true
Ly Now in the market you see them like Corybants
jangling about with their armour of mail
Fiercely they stalk in the midst of the crockery
sternly parade by the cabbage and kail
Ma Right for a soldier should always be soldierly!
Ly Troth tis a mighty ridiculous jest
Watching them haggle for shrimps in the market
place
grimly accoutred with shield and with crest
St Lately I witnessed a captain of cavalry
proudly the while on his charger he sat
Witnessed him soldierly buying an omelet
stowing it all in his cavalry hat
Comes like a *Tereus a Thracian irregular*
shaking his dart and his target to boot
Off runs a shop girl appalled at the sight of him
down he sits soldierly gobbles her fruit
Ma You I presume could adroitly and gingerly
settle this intricate tangled concern
You in a trice could relieve our perplexities

Ly Certainly
Ma How? permit me to learn
Ly Just as a woman with nimble dexterity
thus with her hands disentangles a skein
Hither and thither her spindles unravel it
drawing it out and pulling it plain
So would this weary Hellenic entanglement
soon be resolved by our womanly care
So would our embassies neatly unravel it
drawing it here and pulling it there
Ma Wonderful marvellous feats not a doubt of it
you with your skeins and your spindles can show
Fools! do you really expect to unravel a
terrible war like a bundle of tow?
Ly Ah if you only could manage your politics
just in the way that we deal with a fleece!
Ma Tell us the recipe
Ly First in the washing tub
plunge it and scour it and cleanse it from grease
Purging away all the filth and the nastiness
then on the table expand it and lay
Beating out all that is worthless and mischievous,
picking the burrs and the thistles away
Next for the clubs the cabals and the coteries
banding unrighteously office to win
Treat them as clots in the wool and dissever them
lopping the heads that are forming therein
Then you should card it and comb it and mingle it
all in one Basket of love and of unity
Citizens, visitors strangers and sojourners
all the entire undivided community
Know you a fellow in debt to the Treasury?
Mingle him merrily in with the rest
Also remember the cities our colonies
outlying states in the east and the west
Scattered about to a distance surrounding us
these are our shreds and our fragments of wool
These to one mighty political aggregate
tenderly carefully gather and pull
Twining them all in one thread of good fellowship
thence a magnificent bobbin to spin
Weaving a garment of comfort and dignity
worthily wrapping the People therein
Ma Heard any ever the like of their impudence
these who have nothing to do with the war
Preaching of bobbins and beatings and washing
tubs?
Ly Nothing to do with it wretch that you are!
We are the people who feel it the keenest
doubly on us the affliction is cast
Where are the sons that we sent to your battle
fields?
Ma Silence! a truce to the ills that are past
Ly Then in the glory and grace of our woman
hood
all in the May and the morning of life
Lo we are sitting forlorn and disconsolate
what has a soldier to do with a wife?
We might endure it but ah! for the younger ones,
still in their maiden apartments they stay
Waiting the husband that never approaches them
watching the years that are gliding away

Is something made of brass, and hollow too.
Come, come, out with it. O you silly woman,
What, cuddling up the sacred helmet there
And say you're pregnant?
4th W. Well, and so I am.
Ly. What's this for then?
4th W. Why, if my pains o'ertake me
In the Acropolis, I'd creep inside
And lie and hatch there as the pigeons do.
Ly. Nonsense and stuff: the thing's as plain as can be.
Stay and keep here the name-day of your—helmet.
5th W. But I can't sleep since I walk up here,
So scared I was to see the holy serpent.
6th W. And I shall die for lack of rest, I know,
With this perpetual hootin of the owls.
Ly. O ladies, ladies, cease these tricks, I pray.
You want your husbands. And do you suppose
They don't want us? Full wearisome, I know,
Their nights without us. O bear up, dear friends,
Bear on, be patient, yet one little while,
For I've an oracle (here 'tis) which says
We conquer if we hold together.
5th Women. O read us what it says.
Ly. Then all keep silence.
Soon as the swallows are seen
collecting and crouchin together
Shunning the hoopoes flight
and keeping aloof from the Love birds,
Cometh a rest from ill,
and Zeus the Lord of the Thunder
Changeth the upper to under....
5th W. Preserve us, shall we be the upper?
Ly. Nay but if once they wrangle
and flutter away in dissension
Out of the Temple of God,
then all shall see and acknowledge,
Never a bird of them all
so perjured and frail as the swallow.
5th W. Wow but that's plain enough! O all ye Gods,
Let us not falter in our efforts now.
Come along in. O friends, O dearest friends,
'Twere sin and shame to fail the oracle.

The women, with LYSISTRATA, re-enter the Acropolis. The two CHORUSES again indulge in an interchange of banter. The MEN begin

M. Ch. Now to tell a little story
Fain, fain I grow,
One I heard when quite an urchin
Long, long ago.
How that once
All to shun the nuptial bed
From his home Melanion fled,
To the hills and deserts sped,
Kept his dog,
Wove his snares,
Set his nets,
Trapped his hares;
Home he nevermore would go,
He detested women so.
We are of Melanion's mind,
We detest the womankind.

Man. May I, mother, kiss your cheek?
Woman. Then you won't require a leek.
M. Hoist my leg and kick you, so?
W. Fie! what stalwart legs you show!
M. Just such stalwart legs and strong,
Just such stalwart legs as these,
To the noble chiefs belong,
Phormio and Myronides.

It is now the WOMEN'S turn. The two systems are of course antistrophical.

W. Ch. Now to tell a little story
Fain, fain am I,
To your tale about Melanion
Take this reply.
How that once
Savage Timon, all forlorn,
Dwelt amongst the prickly thorn
Visage shrouded, Fury-born,
Dwelt alone,
Far away,
Cursing men
Day by day;
Never saw his home again,
Kept aloof from haunts of men;
Hating men of evil mind,
Dear to all the womankind.
W. Shall I give your cheek a blow?
M. No, I thank you, no, no, no![1]
W. Hoist my foot and kick you too?
M. Fie! what vulgar feet I view!
W. Vulgar feet! absurd, absurd!
Don't such foolish things repeat;
Never were, upon my word,
Tinier tidier little feet.

The two CHORUSES now retire to the background, and there is again a short pause. Suddenly the voice of LYSISTRATA is heard calling eagerly to her friends.

Ly. Ho, ladies! ladies! quick, this way, this way!
1st W. O what's the matter and what means that cry?
Ly. A man! a man! I see a man approaching,
Wild with desire, beside himself with love.
2nd W. O lady of Cyprus, Paphos, and Cythera,
Keep on straight on the way you are going now!
But where's the man?
Ly. (*pointing*) Down there by Chloe's chapel.
1st W. O so he is: whoever can he be?
Ly. Know you him, anyone?
My. O yes, my dear,
I know him. That's Cinesias, my husband.
Ly. O then 'tis yours to roast and bother him well;
Coaxing, rejecting, cozening, fooling him,
Going all lengths, save what our Oath forbids.
My. Ay, ay, trust me.
Ly. And I'll assist you, dear;
I'll take my stand on here and help befool
And roast our victim. All the rest retire.

The others withdraw, leaving LYSISTRATA alone upon the wall. CINESIAS approaches underneath.

[1] Demeter

Yea they ll build them fleets and navies
and they ll come across the sea
Come like Carian Artemisia
fighting in their ships with me
Or they ll turn their first attention
haply to equestrian fights
If they do I know the issue
there s an end of all the knights!
Well a woman sticks on horseback
look around you see behold
Where on Micon s living frescoes
fight the Amazons of old!
Shall we let these wilful women
O my brothers do the same?
Rather first their necks we ll rivet
tightly in the pillory frame
He seizes the neck of STRATYLLIS

W Ch If our smouldering fires ye wake
Soon our wildbeast wrath will break
Out against you and we ll make
Make you howl to all your neighbours
currycombed poor soul and tanned
Throw aside your mantles sisters
come a firm determined band
In the odour of your wrathful
snappish womanhood to stand
Who ll come forth and fight me? garlic
nevermore nor beans for him
Nay if one sour word ye say
I ll be like the midwife beetle
Following till the eagle lay
Yea for you and yours I reck not
whilst my Lampito survives
And my noble dear Ismenia
loveliest of the Theban wives
Keep decreeing seven times over
not a bit of good you ll do
Wretch abhorred of all the people
and of all our neighbours too
So that when in Hecate s honour
yesterday I sent to get
From our neighbours in Boeotia
such a dainty darling pet
Just a lovely graceful slender
white fleshed eel divinely tender
Thanks to your decrees confound them
one and all refused to send her
And you ll never stop from making
these absurd decrees I know
Till I catch your leg and toss you
—Zeus ha mercy there you go!

An interval of several days must here be supposed to elapse The separation of the sexes has now become unsupportable to both parties and the only question is which side will hold out the longest The CHORUS OF WOMEN *are alarmed at seeing* LYSISTRATA *come on the stage and walk up and down with an anxious and troubled air The first twelve line of the dialogue which ensues are borrowed and burlesqued from Euripides*

W Ch Illustrious leader of this bold emprize
What brings thee forth with trouble in thine eyes?
Ly Vile women s works the feminine hearts they show
These make me pace dejected to and fro
W Ch O what! and O what!
Ly Tis true! tis true!
W Ch O to your friends great queen the tale unfold
Ly 'Tis sad to tell and sore to leave untold
W Ch What what has happened? tell us tell us quick
Ly Aye in one word The girls are—husband sick
W Ch O Zeus! Zeus! O!
Ly Why call on Zeus? the fact is surely so
I can no longer keep the minxes in
They slip out everywhere One I discovered
Down by Pan s grotto burrowing through the loophole
Another wriggling down by crane and pulley
A third deserts outright a fourth I dragged
Back by the hair yestreen just as she started
On sparrow s back straight for Orsilochu s
They make all sorts of shifts to get away
A WOMAN *is seen attempting to cross the stage*
Ha! here comes one deserting Hi there Hi!
Where are you off to?
1st Woman (*hurriedly*) I must just run home.
I left some fine Milesian wools about
I m sure the moths are at them
Ly Moths indeed!
Get back
1st W But really I ll return directly
I only want to spread them on the couch
Ly No spreadings out no running home to-day
1st W What! leave my wools to perish?
Ly If need be
A SECOND WOMAN *now attempts to cross the stage*
2nd W O goodness gracious! O that lovely flax
I left at home unhackled!
Ly Here s another!
She s stealing off to hackle flax forsooth
(*to the* SECOND WOMAN)
Come come get back
2nd W O yes and so I will
I ll comb it out and come again directly
Ly Nay nay no combing once begin with that
And other girls are sure to want the same
Several women enter one after the other
3rd W O holy Eileithyia stay my labour
Till I can reach some lawful travail place
Ly How now!
3rd W My pains are come
Ly Why yesterday
You were not pregnant
3rd W But to-day I am
Quick let me pass Lysistrata at once
To find a midwife
Ly What s it all about?
What s this hard lump?
3rd W That s a male child
Ly Not it

It seems made of brass, and hollow too.
Come, come, out with it. O you silly woman,
Why cuddling up the sacred helmet there
And say you're pregnant?

3rd W. Well, and so I am.

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Like Acropolis, I'd creep inside
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We're sure to conquer if we hold together.

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Wild with desire, beside himself with love.

1st W. O lady of Cyprus, Paphos, and Cythera,
Keep on, straight on, the way you're going now!
But where's the man?

Ly. (*pointing*) Down there, by Chloe's chapel.[1]

1st W. O so he is: whoever can he be!

Ly. Know you him, anyone?

My. O yes, my dear,
I know him. That's Cinesias, my husband.

Ly. O then 'tis yours to roast and bother him well;
Coaxing, yet coy; enticing, fooling him,
Going all lengths, save what our Oath forbids.

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In the odour of your wrathful
snappish womanhood to stand
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nevermore nor beans for him
Nay if one sour word ye say
I ll be like the midwife beetle,
Following till the eagle lay
Yea for you and yours I reck not
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And my noble dear Ismenia
loveliest of the Theban wives
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Ly Aye in one word The girls are—husband sick

W Ch O Zeus! Zeus! O!

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They slip out everywhere One I discovered
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Another wriggling down by crane and pulley
A third deserts outright a fourth I dragged
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On sparrow s back straight for Orsilochu s
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Where are you off to?

1st Woman (hurriedly) I must just run home
I left some fine Milesian wool about
I m sure the moths are at them

Ly Moths indeed!
Get back

1st W But really I ll return directly
I only want to spread them on the couch

Ly No spreadings out no running home to-day

1st W What! leave my wools to perish?

Ly If need be

A SECOND WOMAN *now attempts to cross the stage*

2nd W O goodness gracious! O that lovely flax
I left at home unhackled!

Ly Here s another!
She s stealing off to hackle flax forsooth
(to the SECOND WOMAN*)*
Come come get back

2nd W O yes and so I will
I ll comb it out and come again directly

Ly Nay nay no combing once begin with that
And other girls are sure to want the same.

Several women enter one after the other

3rd W O holy Eileithyia stay my labour
Till I can reach some lawful travail place

Ly How now!

3rd W My pains are come

Ly Why yesterday
You were not pregnant

3rd W But to-day I am
Quick let me pass Lysistrata at once
To find a midwife

Ly What s it all about?
What s this hard lump?

3rd W That s a male child

Ly Not it

Cinesias O me! these pangs and paroxysms of love
Riving my heart keen as a torturer s wheel!
Ly Who s this within the line of sentries?
Ci I
Ly A man?
Ci A man no doubt
Ly Then get you gone
Ci Who bids me go?
Ly I guard on outpost duty
Ci O call me out I pray you Myrrhina
Ly Call you out Myrrhina! And who are you?
Ci Why I m her husband I m Cinesias
Ly O welcome welcome dearest man your name
Is not unknown nor yet unhonoured here
Your wife for ever has it on her lips
She eats no egg no apple but she says
This to Cinesias!
Ci O good heaven! good heaven!
Ly She does indeed and if we ever chance
To talk of men she vows that all the rest
Are veriest trash beside Cinesias
Ci Ah! call her out
Ly And will you give me aught?
Ci O yes I ll give you anything I ve got
Gives money
Ly Then I ll go down and call her
Descends from the wall into the Acropolis
Ci Pray be quick
I have no joy no happiness in life
Since she my darling left me When I enter
My vacant home I weep and all the world
Seems desolate and bare my very meals
Give me no joy now Myrrhina is gone
My (*within*) Ay ay I love I love him but he won t
Be loved by me call me not out to him
As she speaks she appears on the wall
Ci What mean you Myrrhina my sweet sweet love?
Do do come down
My No no sir not to you
Ci What won t you when I call you Myrrhina?
My Why though you call me yet you want me not
Ci Not want you Myrrhina! I m dying for you
My Good bye
Ci Nay nay but listen to the child
At all events speak to Mama my child
Child Mama! Mama! Mama!
Ci Have you no feeling mother for your child
Six days unwashed unsuckled?
My Ay tis I
That feel for baby tis Papa neglects him
Ci Come down and take him then?
My O what it is
To be a mother! I must needs go down
She descends from the wall and four lines below reappears through the gate While she is gone CINESIAS *speaks*
Ci She looks methinks more youthful than she did
More gentle loving and more sweet by far
Her very airs her petulant saucy ways
They do but make me love her love her more
My O my sweet child a naughty father s child
Mama s own darling let me kiss you pet
Ci Why treat me thus you baggage letting others
Lead you astray making me miserable
And yourself too?
My Hands off! don t touch me sir
Ci And all our household treasures yours and mine
Are gone to wrack and ruin
My I don t care
Ci Not care although the fowls are in the house
Pulling your threads to pieces?
My Not a bit
Ci Nor though the sacred rites of wedded love
Have been so long neglected? won t you come?
My No no I won t unless you stop the war
And all make friends
Ci Well then if such your will
We ll e en do this
My Well then if such your will
I ll e en come home but now I ve sworn I won t
Ci Come to my arms do after all this time!
My No no—and yet I won t say I don t love you
Ci You love me? then come to my arms my dearie!
My You silly fellow and the baby here?
Ci O not at all—(*to slave*) here take the baby home
There now the baby s gone out of the way
Come to my arms!
My Good heavens where I ask you!
Ci Pan s grotto will do nicely
My Oh indeed!
How shall I make me pure to ascend the Mount?
Ci Easy enough bathe in the Clepsydra
My I ve sworn an oath and shall I break it man?
Ci On my head be it never mind the oath
My Well let me bring a pallet
Ci Not at all
The ground will do
My What—one so much to me?
I swear I ll never let you lie o the ground
Exit MYRRHINA
Ci The woman loves me, plain enough you see
Enter MYRRHINA *with pallet*
My There lie down do make haste I ll take my things off
But wait a minute I must find a mattress
Ci Bother the mattress not for me
My Why yes
It s nasty on the cords
Ci Give me a kiss
My There then
Ci Smack smack Come back look sharp about it
Exit MYRRHINA *and returns with mattress*
My There now lie down see I take off my things—
But wait a minute—what about a pillow?

G But I don t want a pillow
My I do, though
Exit MYRRHINA
G A 'er table sea t of Barmec des!
My (*return g with pillow*) Up with your head
hop up!
G. I ve all I want.
My What *all*?
G. Yes, all but you come here my precious!
My Tl ere goes the girdle But remember now
You m t not play me false about the peace.
G God d mn me if I do!
My You ha e no ru
G I ant n rug I wa t you in my arms.
My Oh all right you shall have m I ll be qu ck
Exit MYR INA
G Sh 'll be the death of me with all these bed
l thes!
My (*return g with rug*) Up now!
G I m up enou h be sure of that
My Some nice sweet ointment?
G By Apollo, n l
My By Aphrod te yes! say what you l ke
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. Lord Zeus, I pray the ointment may be
spilt!
My (*retu r g with ointment*) Put out your hand,
take some anoint yourself
G I swear this stuff i any th ng b t sweet
The brand is Wait and see no mar iag sm ll!
My How stupid! here I ve b ought the Rhodian
kind
G. It s good en ugh my dear
My R bbish good man!
Exit MYR HINA.
G. P rdit on take the man that first made
ointment!
My (*return g with fl k*) Here t ke this flask.
G I all the fla k I want
Come to my arms, you w et hed creature y ul
N more thi gs, please!
My I w ll by Artemis.
Th go my shoes, at least N w don t fo get,
You ll ote f r pea e, my dearest.
Exit MYRRHINA.
G *Oh I ll see.*
Th creature do e fo me, bamboozled me
Go off and l ft m in thi wretched state.
What will becom of me? wh m shall I f ndle
R bbed f the fa est fai ?
Wh will be eady thi orpha to dandle?
Where Cy lopex? wh re?
F d me a nurse!
M Ch. Sh l ft you curse
Oh I m so so ry O I grie f r ye.
T mo than a man ca bea
N t soul, n t loin not a he rt n t gro n
Can e d res h pa gs f despair
G O Zeu,, what pangs n l throes I bear!
M Ch All this woe h has w ou ht y u, she
only the
Utterly hat ful, th utterly vile.

H Ch Not so but the darling the utterly sweet
Exit
M Ch Sweet sweet do you call her? V le vile
I repeat
Zeus, send me a storm and a whirlwind I pray
To whisk her away l ke a bundle of hay
Up up to the infinite spaces
And toss her and swirl her and twist her and twirl
her
Till, tattered and torn to the earth she is borne
To be crushed—in my ardent embraces.
En er I ERALD
Herald Whaur sall a body fin the Athanian senate
Or the gran lairds? Ha g tten news to tell
Enter MAGISTR TE.
Ma News have you friend?
And what in the world are you?
He A heralt bill el y st a Sp rtan h ralt
Come by the Twa anent a Peace ye ken
Ma And so you come w th a spear beneath y our
armpit!
He Na na n t l
Ma Why do you turn away?
Why cast your cloak bef re you? Is your groin
A trifle swollen fr m the march?
He by Castor
Th s loon s a rogue
Ma Look at yourself you brute!
He There s naught am ss wi me don t play the fule
M Why then what s this?
H A Spartan letter staff
M (*pointing t himself*)
Yes, if *th s* s a Sparta letter staff!
Well and how fare the Spartan ? tell me that
And tell me truly for I know the fact
He They e had eneugh they canna weel be waur
They re sair bested Spartans, allies, an a
Ma And how and whence arose thi tro l le first?
F om Pan?
H Na na twer Lampito, I ween,
First set it gangin then ou hizzies, a
Risin like rinners at ne signal word
Loupit an ubbed an dang the men awa
Ma How like ye that?
He O h we re i waefu case.
They st n abe gh th lassies do, an vow
They ll *no* be couthie wi the ladd es m r
T'll a mak Peac and th ugfly en the War
Ma This s plot they ha e everywhe e been
hatching
These illainous wom n now I see it all
Run home my man and b d your people se d
En oys with absol t powers to treat f r peace
And I will ff with all th speed I can
And get our Council here to do the same
He Nebb t I se fly ye rede me weel I'm
thi kin
Th HERALD *leaves f S artae the* M GISTRATE
returns to th Senate a d th two CHORUSES
now ad c fo f l skirmish
M Ch There is nothin so resi tl ss
a a woman in her ire

Cinesias O me! these pangs and paroxysms of love
Riving my heart keen as a torturer s wheel!
Ly Who s this within the line of sentries?
Ci I
Ly A man?
Ci A man no doubt
Ly Then get you gone
Ci Who bids me go?
Ly I guard on outpost duty
Ci O call me out I pray you Myrrhina
Ly Call you out Myrrhina! And who are you?
Ci Why I m her husband I m Cinesias
Ly O welcome welcome dearest man your name
Is not unknown nor yet unhonoured here
Your wife for ever has it on her lips
She eats no egg no apple but she says
This to Cinesias!
Ci O good heaven! good heaven!
Ly She does indeed and if we ever chance
To talk of men she vows that all the rest
Are veriest trash beside Cinesias
Ci Ah! call her out
Ly And will you give me aught?
Ci O yes I ll give you anything I ve got
Gives money
Ly Then I ll go down and call her
Descends from the wall into the Acropolis
Ci Pray be quick
I have no joy no happiness in life
Since she my darling left me When I enter
My vacant home I weep and all the world
Seems desolate and bare my very meals
Give me no joy now Myrrhina is gone
My (*within*) Ay ay I love I love him but he won t
Be loved by me call me not out to him
As she speaks she appears on the wall
Ci What mean you Myrrhina my sweet sweet love?
Do do come down
My No no sir not to you
Ci What won t you when I call you Myrrhina?
My Why though you call me yet you want me not
Ci Not want you Myrrhina! I m dying for you
My Good bye
Ci Nay nay but listen to the child
At all events speak to Mama my child
Child Mama! Mama! Mama!
Ci Have you no feeling mother for your child
Six days unwashed unsuckled?
My Ay tis I
That feel for baby tis Papa neglects him
Ci Come down and take him then?
My O what it is
To be a mother! I must needs go down
She descends from the wall and four lines below reappears through the gate While she is gone CINESIAS *speaks*
Ci She looks methinks, more youthful than she did
More gentle loving and more sweet by far
Her very airs her petulant saucy ways
They do but make me love her love her more
My O my sweet child a naughty father s child
Mama s own darling let me kiss you pet
Ci Why treat me thus you baggage letting others
Lead you astray making me miserable
And yourself too?
My Hands off! don t touch me sir
Ci And all our household treasures yours and mine
Are gone to wrack and ruin
My I don t care
Ci Not care although the fowls are in the house
Pulling your threads to pieces?
My Not a bit
Ci Nor though the sacred rites of wedded love
Have been so long neglected? won t you come?
My No no I won t unless you stop the war
And all make friends
Ci *Well then if such your will*
We ll e en do this
My Well then if such your will
I ll e en come home but now I ve sworn I won t
Ci Come to my arms do after all this time!
My No no—and yet I won t say I don t love you
Ci You love me? then come to my arms my dearie!
My You silly fellow and the baby here?
Ci O not at all—(*to slave*) here take the baby home
There now the baby s gone out of the way
Come to my arms!
My Good heavens where I ask you!
Ci Pan s grotto will do nicely
My Oh indeed!
How shall I make me pure to ascend the Mount?
Ci Easy enough bathe in the Clepsydra
My I ve sworn an oath and shall I break it man?
Ci On my head be it never mind the oath
My Well let me bring a pallet
Ci Not at all
The ground will do
My What—one so much to me?
I swear I ll never let you lie o the ground
Exit MYRRHINA
Ci The woman loves me, plain enough you see
Enter MYRRHINA *with pallet*
My There lie down do make haste I ll take my things off
But wait a minute I must find a mattress
Ci *Bother the mattress not for me*
My Why yes
It s nasty on the cords
Ci Give me a kiss
My There then
Ci Smack smack Come back look sharp about it
Exit MYRRHINA *and returns with mattress*
My There now lie down see I take off my things—
But wait a minute—what about a pillow?

G. But I don t want a pillow
My I do, though.
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. A veritable feast of Barmecides!
My (*return* *th pillow*) Up with your head
hop up!
G. I've all I want.
My What, a ?
G. Yes, all but you come here my precious!
M There goes the girdle. But remember now
You must not play me false about the peace.
G. God damn m if I do!
My You ha no ru
G. I want no rug I want ou in my arms.
My Oh, all ri ht, you shall have me I'll be quick.
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. She'll be the death of me with all these bed clothes!
My (*returning* *th rug*) Up now!
G. I m p enough be sure of that.
My Some nice sweet ointment?
G. By Apollo, no!
My By Aphrodite, yes! say what you like
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. Lord Zeus, I pray the ointment may be spilt!
My (*return* *g with ointment*) Put out your hand, take some anoint yourself.
G. I swear this stuff a ything but sweet
The brand is W t and see no marriage smell!
My H w stupid! here I e brou ht the Rhodian kind.
G. It good enough, my dear
My Rubbish, good man!
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. Perdi ion take the man that firs made oi ment!
My (*return* *with flask*) Here take this flask.
G. I all th flask I want.
Come to my arms, you wretched creatur you!
No more things, please!
My I will, by Artemis.
Ther go my shoes. t least Now don t forget,
You'll vo e for pea e, my dearest.
Exit MYRRHINA.
G. Oh, I ll see,
Th creature s don for m bamboozled me,
Gone off and left m in this wr tched tate.
What will become of me? whom shall I foodl.
R bbed of th fairest fair?
Who ill be ready this orphan to dandle?
Where Cynal pex here?
F nd m a urse!
M Ch. S e left you curse.
Oh I m so sorry O I gri ve for ye,
Tis more than a man ca bear
Not soul, not loin not heart, not a *ero*...,
Can endure such pangs of despair
G. O Zeus, what pangs and throes I bear!
M Ch. All this woe she has wrou ht you, she
onl th
Utterly hateful, th utterly ile.

B Ch. Not so but the darling the utterly sweet
Exit
M Ch Sweet sweet do you call her? Vile vile
I repeat
Zeus, send me a storm and a whirlwind I pray
To whisk her away like a bundle of hay
Up up to the infinite spaces,
And toss her and swirl her and tw st her and twirl
her
Till, tattered and torn to the earth she is borne,
To be crushed—in m ardent embraces.
Enter H R LD.
Herald What is all a body fin the Athanian senate
Or the gran lairds? Ha gotten news to tell.
Enter MAGISTR TE.
Ma News have you friend?
And what in the world are you?
He A herald bills I j st a Spartan herald
Come by th Twa anent a Peace ye ken
Ma And so you come with a spear beneath your armpit!
He N na, not I
Ma Why do you turn away?
Why cast your cloak before you? Is your groin
A trifle swollen from the march?
He by Castor
This loon s a rogue
Ma Look at yourself, you brute!
H There s naught amiss wi me don t play the fule.
Ma Why then what s this?
He A Spartan letter-staff
Ma. (*pointing to himself*)
Yes, f *this* is a Spartan letter staff!
W ll, and how fare the Spartans? tell me that
And tell me trul for I know the fact
He They e bad eneu h, th y canna weel be waur
They re sair bes ed Spartans, allies an a
Ma And how and whence arose this trouble first?
From Pan?
H Na, na, twas Lampito, I ween,
F rst set it gangin th n our hizzies, a
Rinn like rinners t ane signal word
Loupit, an j bbed an dan the men awa
Ma How like ye that?
He Och we e in waefu case.
They stan abeigh the lassies do, an ow
The ll no be couthi wi the laddies mair
Till a mak Peac and throu hly en th War
Ma This is a plot they ha e everywhere been hatching
These villainous women now I see it ll.
Run home, my man, and bid your people send
En oys with absolut powers to treat for peace,
And I will ff with all the speed I can,
And get our Council h r t do the same
He N bbut, I se fly ye rede m weel, I'm thinkin
The HER. LD *leaves for* S *artae the* M GISTR TE *r turns to the Sena and the two* CHORUSES *now advance for final skirmi h*
M Ch. There is nothing so restless
as a woman in her ire,

She is wilder than a leopard
she is fiercer than a fire.
W Ch And yet you re so daft
as with women to contend
When tis in your power to win me
and have me as a friend
M Ch I ll never never cease
all women to detest
W Ch That s as you please hereafter
meanwhile you re all undressed
I really can t allow it
you are getting quite a joke
Permit me to approach you
and to put you on this cloak
M Ch Now that s not so bad
or unfriendly I declare
It was only from bad temper
that I stripped myself so bare
W Ch There now you look a man
and none will joke and jeer you
And if you weren t so spiteful
that no one can come near you
I d have pulled out the insect
that is sticking in your eye
M Ch Ay that is what s consuming me
that little biter fly
Yes scoop it out and show me
when you ve got him safe away
The plaguy little brute
he s been biting me all day
W Ch I ll do it sir I ll do it
but you re a cross one you
O Zeus! here s a monster
I am pulling forth to view
Just look! don t you think
tis a Tricorysian gnat?
M Ch And he s been dig dig digging
(so I thank you much for that)
Till the water now he s gone
keeps running from my eye
W Ch But although you ve been so naughty
I ll come and wipe it dry
And I ll kiss you
M Ch No not kiss me!
W Ch Will you nill you it must be
M Ch Get along a murrain on you
Tcha! what coaxing rogues are ye!
That was quite a true opinion
which a wise man gave about you
We can t live with such tormentors
no by Zeus nor yet without you
Now we ll make a faithful treaty
and for evermore agree
I will do no harm to women
they shall do no harm to me
Join our forces come along
one and all commence the song

Joint Chorus

Not to objurgate and scold you
Not unpleasant truths to say
But with words and deeds of bounty
Come we here to-day
Ah enough of idle quarrels,
Now attend I pray
Now whoever wants some money
Minas two or minas three
Let them say so man and woman
Let them come with me
Many purses large and—empty
In my house they ll see
Only you must strictly promise
Only you indeed must say
That whenever Peace re greet us
You will—not repay

Some Carystian friends are coming
Pleasant gentlemen to dine
And I ve made some soup and slaughtered
Such a lovely swine
Luscious meat ye ll have and tender
At this feast of mine
Come along yourselves and children
Come to grace my board to-day
Take an early bath and deck you
In your best array
Then walk in and ask no questions
Take the readiest way
Come along like men of mettle
Come as though twere all for you
Come you ll find my only entrance
Locked and bolted too

The LACONIAN AMBASSADORS *are seen approaching*

Lo here from Sparta the envoys come
in a pitiful plight they are hobbling in
Heavily hangs each reverend beard
heavily droops and trails from the chin
Laconian envoys! first I bid you welcome
And next I ask how goes the world with *you*?

Enter LACONIAN AMBASSADORS

Laconian I needna mony words to answer that!
Tis unco plain hoo the warld gangs wi us
Ch Dear dear this trouble grows from bad to worse
Lac Tis awfu bad tis nae gude talkin cummer
We maun hae peace whatever gaet we gang till t
Ch And here good faith I see our own Autochthons
Bustling along They seem in trouble too

The ATHENIAN AMBASSADORS *enter*

Athenian Can some good soul inform me where to find
Lysistrata? our men are (*shrugging his shoulders*) as you see

He perceives the LACONIAN AMBASSADORS

Ch Sure we are smitten with the same complaint
Say don t you get a fit i the early morning?
At Why we are all worn out with doing this
So Cleisthenes will have to serve our turn
Unless we can procure a speedy peace
Ch If you are wise wrap up unless you wish
One of those Hermes choppers to catch sight o you
At Prudent advice by Zeus.

Lac. Aye by the Twa
Gie us the clout to cover up oor seals.
Ath. Aha, Laconians! a bad business this.
Lac. 'Deed is it, lovey; though it grow nae waur
Gin ther see us too illa'ang like this.
Ath. Well, well, Laconians, come to facts at once.
What brings you here?
Lac. We're envoys sent to clatter
Aent a Peace.
Ath. Ah, just the same as we.
Then let's call out Lysistrata at once
There's none but she can make us friends again.
Lac. Aye, by the Twa, ca' oot Lysistrata.
Ath. Nay, here she is, no need it seems, to call.
She heard your voices, and she comes uncalled.
LYSISTRATA *comes forward attended by her handmaid* RECONCILIATION
Ch. O Lady noblest and best of all!
arise, arise, and thyself reveal,
Gentle, severe, attractive, harsh,
well skilled with all our complaints to deal,
The first and foremost of Hellas come,
they are caught by the charm of thy spell-drawn heel.
They come to Thee to adjust their claims,
disputes to settle and strifes to heal.
Ly. And no such mighty matter if you take them
In Love's first passion, still unsatisfied.
I'll try them now. Go, *Reconciliation*,
Bring those Laconians hither, not with rude
Ungentle harshness hurrying them along,
Not in the awkward style our husbands used,
But with all tact, as only women can.
So; so: now bring me those Athenians too.
Now then, Laconians, stand beside me here,
And you stand there, and listen to my words.
I am a woman, but I don't lack sense;
I'm of myself not badly off for brains,
And often listening to my father's words
And old men's talk, I've not been badly schooled.
And now, dear friends, I wish to chide you both,
That ye, all of one blood, all brethren sprinkling
The selfsame altars from the selfsame laver,
At Pylae, Pytho, and Olympia, aye
And many others which 'twere long to name,
That ye, Hellenes—with barbarian foes
Armed looking on—fight and destroy Hellenes!
So far one reprimand includes you both.
Ath. And I, I'm dying all for love, sweetheart.
Ly. And ye, Laconians, for I'll turn to you,
Do ye not mind how Perikleidas came
(His coat was scarlet but his cheeks were white)
And sat a suppliant at Athenian altars
And begged for help? 'Twas when Messene pressed
Weighing you down, and God's great earthquake too.
And Cimon went, Athenian Cimon went
With his four thousand men, and saved your State.
And ye, whom Athens aided, now in turn
Ravage the land which erst befriended you.
Ath. For Zeus they're wrong, they're wrong,
Lysistrata.
Lac. O ay we're wrang, but she's a braw ane, he.
Ly. And you, Athenians, think ye that I mean
To let you off? Do ye not mind when ye
Wore skirts of hide, how these Laconians came
And stood beside you in the fight alone
And slew full many a stout Thessalian trooper
Full many of Hippias's friends and helpers,
And freed the State, and gave your people back
The civic mantle for the servile skirt?
Lac. Danged, an there e'er was a bonnier lassie!
Ath. Hanged if I e'er saw so sweet a creature!
Ly. Such friends aforetime, helpers, each the other,
What is it makes you fight and bicker now?
Why can't ye come to terms? Why can't ye be?
Lac. Troth an' we're willin', gin they gie us back
Yon girdled neuk.
Ath. What's that?
Lac. Pylus, ye runny
Whilk we've been aye langin' an' graipin' for
Ath. No, by Poseidon, but you won't get that.
Ly. O let them have it, man.
Ath. How can we stir
Without it?
Ly. Ask for something else instead.
Ath. Hm, hm, let's see: suppose they give us back
Echinus first, then the full bosomed gulf
Of Melis, then the straight Megaric limbs.
Lac. Eh, mon, ye're daft; ye'll no hae everythin'.
Ly. O let it be: don't wrangle about the limbs.
Ath. I'feck, I'd like to strip, and plough my field.
Lac. An' I to bring the midden, by the Twa.
Ly. All this ye'll do, when once ye come to terms
So if ye would, go and consult together
And talk it over, each with your allies.
Ath. Allies, say she! Now my good soul consider
What *do* they want, what *can* they want, but this,
Their wives again?
Lac. The fient a ither wiss
Ha mine, I ween.
Ath. Nor my Carystians either.
Ly. O that is well: so purify yourselves
And in the Acropolis we'll feast you all
On what our cupboard still retains in store.
There each to other plight your oath and troth,
Then every man receive his wife again,
And hie off homeward.
Ath. That we will, and quickly.
Lac. Gang on: we'se follow.
Ath. Aye, as quick as quick.
LYSISTRATA *and the* MEN *pass* DOWN *go in*

Chorus

Gorgeous robes and golden trinkets,
Shawls and mantles rich and rare
I will lend to all who need them,
Lend for youths to wear
Or if any comrade's daughter
Would the Basket bear
One and all I here invite you,
Freely of my goods partake
Nought is sealed so well, but boldly
Ye the seals may break,
And of all that lurk behind them,

Quick partition make
Only if you find the treasures
Only if the stores you spy
You must have I tell you plainly
Keener sight than I

Is *there* any man among you
With a lot of children small
With a crowd of hungry servants
Starving in his hall?
I have wheat to spare in plenty
I will feed them all
Loaves a quart apiece I ll give them
Come along whoever will
Bring your bags and bring your wallets
For my slave to fill
Manes he s the boy to pack them
Tight and tighter still
Only you must keep your distance
Only you must needs take care
Only—don t approach my doorway
Ware the watch-dog ware!

Some IDLERS *come in from the market place and attempt to enter the house in which the* AMBASSADORS *are feasting*

1st Idler Open the door there ho!
Porter Be off you rascal!
1st Id What won t you stir? I ve half a mind to roast you
All with this torch No that s a vulgar trick
I won t do that Still if the audience wish it
To please their tastes we ll undertake the task
2nd Id And we with you will undertake the task
Po Hang you be off! what are you at? you ll catch it
Come come begone that these Laconians here
The banquet ended may depart in peace
The banqueters begin to come out
1st At Well if I ever saw a feast like this!
What cheery fellows those Laconians were
And we were wondrous witty in our cups
2nd At Ay ay tis when we re sober we re so daft
Now if the State would take a friend s advice
Twould make its envoys always all get drunk
When we go dry to Sparta all our aim
Is just to see what mischief we can do
We don t hear aught they say and we infer
A heap of things they never said at all
Then we bring home all sorts of differing tales
Now everything gives pleasure if a man
When he should sing Cleitagora strike up
With Telamon s song we d clap him on the back
And say twas excellent ay and swear it too
The IDLERS *again approach*
Po Why bless the fellows here they come again
Crowding along Be off you scoundrels will you?
1st Id By Zeus we must the guests are coming out
The AMBASSADORS *come out from the banquet*
Lac O lovey mine tak up the pipes an blaw
An I se just dance an sing a canty sang
Anent the Athanians an our ainsells too

At Ay by the Powers, take up the pipes and blow
Eh but I dearly love to see you dance

Lac Stir Memory stir the chiels
Wi that auld sang o thine
Whilk kens what we an Attics did
In the gran fechts lang syne

At Artemisium They
A resolute an strang
Rushed daurly to the fray
Hurtlin like Cudes amang
The timmered ships an put the Medes to rout
An Us Leonidas led out
Like gruesome boars I ween
Whettin our tuskies keen
Muckle around the chaps was the white freath gleamin
Muckle adoon the legs was the white freath streamin
For a unnumbered as the sands
Were they thae Persian bands

O Artemis the pure the chaste
The virgin Queller o the beasties
O come wi power an come wi haste
An come to join our friendly feasties
Come wi thy stoutest tether
To knit our sauls thegither
An gie us Peace in store
An Luve for evermore
Far hence far hence depart
The tod s deceitfu heart!
O virgin huntress pure an chaste
O come wi power an come wi haste.

Ly There all is settled all arranged at last
Now take your ladies you Laconians those
And you take these then standing side by side,
Each by his partner lead your dances out
In grateful honour to the Gods and O
Be sure you nevermore offend again

Ch Now for the Chorus the Graces the minstrelsy
Call upon Artemis queen of the glade
Call on her brother the Lord of festivity
Holy and gentle one mighty to aid
Call upon Bacchus afire with his Maenades
Call upon Zeus in the lightning arrayed
Call on his queen ever blessed adorable
Call on the holy infallible Witnesses,
Call them to witness the peace and the harmony
This which divine Aphrodite has made
Allala! Lallala! Lallala Lallala!
Whoop for victory Lallalalae!
Evoi! Evoi! Lallala Lallala!
Evae! Evae! Lallalalae

Our excellent new song is done
Do you Laconian give us one

Lac. Lea e Ta vety an quickly
Hither Muse Laconian, com
H mn th Gud o braw Am clae
Hymn Athana, Brassin-dom
H mn th T ndarids, fore er
Sportin by Eurotas ri r
Noo then, noo th tep begin,
T lin licht th fleecy skin
Sae we se join our bl thesome oices,
Praisin Sparta, loud an fan
Sparta wha f uld rejoices
In th. Choral dance sa
O to watch her bonnie dochters
Sport alan Eurota waters!

Winsome feet for ever plyin
Fleet as fill es, wild an gay
W nsome tresses tossin flyin
As o B cchanals at play
Leda s dochter on before us,
Pure an sprety guides the Chorus.
O ward go,
Wh lst your eager hand represses
A the glory o your tresses
Wh l t your ea er foot is spri nin
Like the roe
Whil t our eager oice is u gin
Praise to Her in mi ht excell n
Goddess o the Brassin Dwellin

THE THESMOPHORIAZUSAE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MNESILOCHUS	CLEISTHENES
EURIPIDES	CRITYLLA
A SERVANT OF AGATHON	A POLICEMAN
AGATHON	A SCYTHIAN
CRIERESS	ECHO
WOMEN	CHORUS OF THESMOPHORIAZUSAE

Two elderly men are discovered when the Play opens pacing along an Athenian street In one both by his gait and by his language we at once recognize a Philosopher and a Genius His companion is a garrulous and cheery old man evidently tired out by a long promenade They prove to be the poet EURIPIDES *and* MNESILOCHUS *his connexion by marriage in the translation inaccurately styled his cousin The latter is the first to speak*

Mnesilochus Zeus! is the swallow *never* going to come?
Tramped up and down since daybreak! I can t stand it
Might I before my wind s *entirely* gone
Ask where you re taking me Euripides?

Euripides You re not to hear the things which face to face
You re going to see

Mn What! Please say that again
I m not to hear?

Eu The things which you shall see

Mn And not to see?

Eu The things which you shall hear

Mn A pleasant jest! a mighty pleasant jest!
I m not to hear or see at all I see

Eu (*in high philosophic rhapsody*)
To hear! to see! full different things I ween
Yea verily generically diverse

Mn What s diverse ?

Eu I will explicate my meaning
When Ether first was mapped and parcelled out
And living creatures breathed and moved in her
She to give sight implanted in their heads
The Eye a mimic circlet of the Sun
And bored the funnel of the Ear to hear with

Mn Did *she*! That s why I m not to hear or see!
I m very glad to get that information!
O what a thing it is to talk with Poets!

Eu Much of such knowledge I shall give you

Mn (*involuntarily*) O!
Then p raps (excuse me) you will tell me how
Not to be lame to morrow after this

Eu (*loftily disregarding the innuendo*)
Come here and listen

Mn (*courteously*) Certainly I will

Eu See you that wicket?

Mn Why by Heracles,
Of course I do

Eu Be still

Mn Be still the wicket?

Eu And most attentive

Mn Still attentive wicket?

Eu There dwells observe the famous Agathon
The Tragic Poet

Mn (*considering*) Agathon Don t know him

Eu He is that Agathon—

Mn (*interrupting*) Dark brawny fellow?

Eu O no quite different don t you know him really?

Mn Big whiskered fellow?

Eu Don t you know him really?

Mn No (*Thinks again*) No I don t at least I don t remember

Eu (*severely*) I fear there s much you don t remember sir
But step aside I see his servant coming
See he has myrtles and a pan of coals
To pray methinks for favourable rhymes

The two retire into the background Agathon s SERVANT *enters from the house*

Servant All people be still!
Allow not a word from your lips to be heard
For the Muses are here and are making their odes
In my Master s abodes
Let Ether be lulled and forgetful to blow
And the blue sea waves let them cease to flow
And be noiseless

Mn Fudge!

Eu Hush hush if you please

Se Sleep birds of the air with your pinions at ease
Sleep beasts of the field with entranquillized feet
Sleep sleep and be still

Mn Fudge fudge I repeat

Se For the soft and the terse professor of verse
Our Agathon now is about to—

Mn (*scandalized*) No no!

Se What s that?

Mn 'Twas the *ether forgetting to blow*!

Se (*beginning pettishly but soon falling back into his former tone*)

...to say he is going to lay
The stocks and the scaffolds for buildin a play
And now he hews them, and sweetly he glues them,
And a proverb he takes, and an epithet makes,
And ... moulds a most waxen and delicate song,
And ... funnels, and funnels, and—
Sk. Does what is wrong
Sc. What clown have we here so close to our eaves?
Mn. Why one who will take you and him, by your leaves,
Both you and your terse professor of verse
And with blows and with knocks set you both on the stocks,
And ... and fun..., and pummel, and worse.
Sc. Old man, you must have been a rare pert youngster.
Eu. O friend not him but quickly call me out
Your master Agathon do pray make haste.
Sc. No need of prayer he's coming forth directly.
He's moulding odes and in the cold hard winter
He cannot turn, and twist, and shape his strophes
Until they are warmed and so tened in the sun
The servant goes back into the house
Mn. And what am I to do?
Eu. You're to keep quiet
O Zeus! the Hour is come, and so the Man
Mn. O what's the matter? what disturbs you so?
O tell me what I really want to know
Come, I'm your cousin won't you tell your cousin?
Eu. There's a great danger brewing for my life
Mn. O, tell your cousin what.
Eu. This hour decides
Whether Euripides shall live or die.
Mn. Why how that There's no tribunal sitting
No Court, no Council, will be held to-day
'Tis the Mid Fast, the third Home Festival.
Eu. It is it is I wish enough it wasn't.
For on this day the womankind has sworn
To hold great assembly to discuss
How best to serve me out.
Mn. Good gracious! Why?
Eu. (*with the ... ... innocence*)
Because, they say I write lampoons upon them.
Mn. Zeus and Poseidon! they may well say that.
But tell your cousin what you mean to do.
Eu. I want to get the poet Agathon
To go among them.
Mn. Tell your cousin why
Eu. To mingle in the Assembly perhaps to speak
On my behalf.
Mn. What, openly do you mean?
Eu. O no, disguised dressed up in women's clothes.
Mn. A bright idea that and worthy you
For in all craftiness we take the cake.

B ... contrivance very common in ancient theatres, portion of AGATHON's house is here wheeled forward, turning ... pivot so as to disclose the interior of an apartment The poet is discovered, surrounded by the most effeminate luxuries and in the act of writing a tragic play He has just composed, and is now about to recite a little lyrical dialogue between his Chorus and one of his actors.

Eu. O hush!
Mn. What now?
Eu. Here's Agathon himself.
Mn. Where? Which
Eu. Why there the man in the machine
Mn. O dear what ails me? Am I growing blind?
I see Cyrene but I see no man
Eu. Do, pray be silent he's just going to sing
AGATHON *now gives a fantastic bird trill.*
Mn. Is it "the Pathways of the Ants," or what?
AGATHON *now sings his little dialogue in a soft womanly voice and with pretty effeminate gestures*
Agathon. (*As actor*) Move ye slowly with the holy Torchlight dear to Awful Shades,
Singing sweetly dancing featly
Yes, and neatly freeborn maids.
(*As Chorus*) Whose the song of festal praise?
Only tell us, we are zealous
Evermore our hymns to raise
(*As actor*) Sing of Leto, sing of Thee too,
Archer of the golden bow
Bright Apollo, in the hollow
Glades where Ilian rivers flow
Buildin build ...
(*As Chorus*) Raise the music softly swelling
To the fame of Leto's name
To the God in song excelling
Brightest he of all there be
Giving gifts of minstrelsy
(*As actor*) Sing the maiden, quiver laden,
From the wood and oaks emerging,
Haunted shades of mountain glades,
Artemis, the ever Virgin.
(*As Chorus*) We rejoice, heart and voice,
Hymning praising gentle phrasing,
Her the maiden quiver laden.
(*As actor*) Soft pulsation of the Asian
Lyre, to which the dancers go,
When the high and holy Graces
Weave their swiftly whirling paces,
Phrygian measure, to and fro.
(*As Chorus*) Lyre El... ... only vision,
When thy ... ... tones arise,
Comes the light of joy and gladness
Flashing from immortal eyes.
Eyes will glisten, ears will listen,
When our manful numbers ring
Mighty master Son of Leto,
Thine the glory Thou the King.
MNESILOCHUS *utters a cry of delight*
Mn. Wonderful! Wonderful!
How sweet, how soft, how ravishing the strain!
What melting words! and as I heard them sung,
Ye amorous Powers, there crept upon my soul
A pleasant dreamy rapturous titillation.
And now dear youth, for I would question thee

And sift thee with the words of Aeschylus
Whence art thou what thy country what thy garb?
Why all this wondrous medley? Lyre and silks
A minstrel's lute a maiden's netted hair
Girdle and wrestler's oil a strange conjunction
How comes a sword beside a looking glass?
What art thou man or woman? If a man
Where are his clothes? his red Laconian shoes?
If woman 'tis not like a woman's shape
What art thou speak or if thou tell me not
Myself must guess thy gender from thy song
Ag Old man old man my ears receive the words
Of your tongue's utterance yet I heed them not
I choose my dress to suit my poesy
A poet sir must needs adapt his ways
To the high thoughts which animate his soul
And when he sings of women he assumes
A woman's garb and dons a woman's habits
Mn (*aside to* EURIPIDES) When you wrote Phaedra did you take her habits?
Ag But when he sings of men his whole appearance
Conforms to man What nature gives us not
The human soul aspires to imitate
Mn (*as before*) Zounds if I'd seen you when you wrote the Satyrs!
Ag Besides a poet never should be rough
Or harsh or rugged Witness to my words
Anacreon Alcaeus Ibycus
Who when they filtered and diluted song
Wore soft Ionian manners and attire
And Phrynichus perhaps you have seen him sir
How fair he was and beautifully dressed
Therefore his plays were beautifully fair
For as the Worker so the Work will be
Mn Then that is why harsh Philocles writes harshly
And that is why vile Xenocles writes vilely
And cold Theognis writes such frigid plays
Ag Yes that is why And I perceiving this
Made myself womanlike
Mn My goodness how?
Eu O stop that yapping in my youthful days
I too was such another one as he
Mn Good gracious! I don't envy you your schooling
Eu (*sharply*) Pray let us come to business sir
Mn Say on
Eu A wise man Agathon compacts his words
And many thoughts compresses into few
So I in my extremity am come
To ask a favour of you
Ag Tell me what
Eu The womankind at their Home feast to-day
Are going to pay me out for my lampoons
Ag That's bad indeed but how can I assist you?
Eu Why every way If you'll disguise yourself
And sit among them like a woman born
And plead my cause you'll surely get me off
There's none but you to whom I dare entrust it
Ag Why don't you go yourself and plead your cause?
Eu I'll tell you why They know me well by sight
And I am grey you see and bearded too
But you've a baby face a treble voice
A fair complexion pretty smooth and soft
Ag Euripides!
Eu Yes
Ag Wasn't it you who wrote
You value life do you think your father doesn't?
Eu It was what then?
Ag Expect not me to bear
Your burdens that were foolishness indeed
Each man must bear his sorrows for himself
And troubles when they come must needs be met
By manful acts and not by shifty tricks
Mn Aye true for you your wicked ways are shown
By sinful acts and not by words alone
Eu But tell me really why you fear to go
Ag They'd serve me worse than you
Eu How so?
Ag How so?
I'm too much like a woman and they'd think
That I was come to poach on their preserves
Mn Well I must say that's not a bad excuse
Eu Then won't you really help?
Ag I really won't
Eu Thrice luckless I! Euripides is done for!
Mn O friend! O cousin! don't lose heart like this
Eu Whatever can I do?
Mn Bid *him* go hang!
See here am I deal with me as you please
Eu (*striking while the iron is hot*)
Well if you'll really give yourself to me
First throw aside this overcloak
Mn 'Tis done
But how are you going to treat me?
Eu Shave you here
And singe you down below
Mn (*magnanimously*) Well do your worst
I've said you may and I'll go through with it
Eu You've always Agathon got a razor handy
Lend us one will you?
Ag Take one for yourself
Out of the razor case
Eu Obliging youth!
(*To* MNESILOCHUS) Now sit you down (MNESILOCHUS *seats himself in a chair*) and puff your right cheek out
Mn Oh!
Eu What's the matter? Shut your mouth or else
I'll clap a gag in
Mn Lackalackaday!
He jumps up and runs away
Eu Where are you fleeing?
Mn To sanctuary I
Shall I sit quiet to be hacked like that?
Demeter no!
Eu Think how absurd you'll look
With one cheek shaven and the other not
Mn (*doggedly*) Well I don't care

Eu. O by the Gods, come back.
Pray don't forsake me.
Mn. Miserable me!
He resumes his seat Euripides goes on with the shaving
Eu. Sit steady raise your chin don't wriggle so.
Mn. (*wincing*) O tchi, tchi tchi!
Eu. There there it's o er now
Mn. And I m, worse luck, a Rifled Volunteer
Eu. Well, ne er mind you re looking beautiful.
Glance in this mirror
Mn. Well then, hand it here
Eu. What see you there?
Mn. (*in disgust*) Not me but Cleisthenes.
Eu. Get up bend forward I e to singe you now
Mn. O me, you'll scald me like a sucking pig
Eu. Someone within there bring me out a torch
Now then, stoop forward gently mind yourself.
Mn. I'll see to that. H y! I ve caught fire there.
H y!
O water! water! neighbours, bring your buckets.
Fire! Fire! I tell you I m on fire, I am!
Eu. There, it s all right
Mn. All right when I m a cinder?
Eu. Well, well, the worst is o er tis ndeed
It won t pain now
Mn. F u h her s a smell f burning!
Drat t, I'm roasted all about the stern
Eu. N y heed it not I'll ha e t spon ed directly
Mn. I'd lik to catch a f llow sponging *me*
Eu. Though you begrud e your acti e personal aid
Yet, Agathon, you won t refuse to lend us
A dress and sash you can t d ny you e got them
Ag. Take them, and welcome. I begrudge them not.
M. What s first to do?
Eu. Put on this y llow silk
M. By Aphrodite but tis wondrous nice
Eu. Gird it up tighter
Mn. Where s the girdle?
Eu. Here.
Mn. Make t sit neatly there bout the legs.
Eu. Now for a snood nd hair net
Ag. Will this do?
It s quit natty hairdress it my nightcap
Eu. Th ry thin faith th ery thi
Mn. Does it look well?
Eu. Zeu ! I hould think r did!
N w f r mantle.
Ag. T ke on from th couch.
Eu. A pair f woman s hoes.
Ag. W ll here are mine.
M. Do they look well?
Eu. Th y re loose nou h, I trow
Ag. You see to that I e lent you all you eed
Will someo e k ndly wh l me n again?
Agatho s partment with AGATHON *in it is wheeled back int the ho se* E RI ID S *nd* MNE LOCH *are left st nd g on the stag* E RI *turns* MN SILOCHUS *round nd survey him with complacency*
Eu. There then, th man a regular w man now
At least to look at and if you ve to speak
Put on a femin ne mincing voice
M. (*in a shrill treble*) I ll try
Eu. And now begone and prosper
M. Wait a bit.
Not till you e sworn—
Eu. Sworn what?
Mn. That if I get
In any scrape you'll sur ly see me through.
Eu. I swear by Ether Zeus s dwelli g place.
M. As well by ile Hippocrates s cabin
Eu. W ll th n I swear by e ery blessed God
M. And please remember twas your *mind* that swore
Not your tongue only please remember that
The background of the scene opens and a large buildi g is pushed forward upon the st ge representing the Thesmophorium or Temple of the Home givers The Athenian ladies wh form the CHORUS *of the Play are seen a few lines later throngi g into the orchestra to assist in the solemnities of the festival, and t take part in the Assembly they are about to hold The air above them is th ck with the smoke of the torches they are bearing n their hands* E RI I D S *th k ut me t make himself scarce* MNES ILOCHUS *assumes the f ssy airs d treble vo ce of a Athenia matro talki g t an imaginary maid serv t*
Eu. O g t you gone for ther s the signal hoisted
O er th Temple the re assembl ng now
I think I ll lea e you.
M. Thratta, come along
O Thratta Thratta here s a lot of w men
Comi g up here! O what a fla of t rches!
O sweet Twain goddesses, vouchsafe me now
A pleas t day and eke safe return.
Set down the bask t Thratta give me out
The sacred cake to offe to the Twa n.
O dread Dem ter high unearthly one,
O Persephassa grant your otaress grace
T join n ma y festi als like this,
Or f n t so, at least escape this once
And may my daughter by your leaves, pick up
A wealthy hu band nd a fool t boot
And little Bull-calf have hi share f brains.
N w then I wonder wh ch i the best place
To hea the peeches? Thratta you may go
The fficials now take their places and the Assembly at once begins.
These a e not th ngs fo servant gi ls to hear
Crier is Wo ldly clamour
Pass away!
Sil ce Silence,
Whil we pray
To th Twain, the H me bestowers,
Holy Parent holy Da ghter
And to Wealth and Hea enly Beauty
And to Earth the foster mother
And to He mes and the Graces,
That they to this important hi h debate
Grant fa our and success,

Making it useful to the Athenian State
And to ourselves no less
And O that she who counsels best to-day
About the Athenian nation
And our own commonwealth of women may
Succeed by acclamation
These things we pray and blessings on our cause
Sing Paean Paean ho! with merry loud applause
Chorus We in thy prayers combine
And we trust the Powers Divine
Will on these their suppliants smile
Both Zeus the high and awful
And the golden lyred Apollo
From the holy Delian isle
And thou our Mighty Maiden
Lance of gold and eye of blue
Of the God contested city
Help us too
And the many named the Huntress
Gold fronted Leto s daughter
And the dread Poseidon ruling
Over Ocean s stormy water
Come from the deep where fishes
Swarm and the whirlwinds rave
And the Oreads of the mountain
And the Nereids of the wave
Let the Golden Harp sound o er us
And the Gods with favour crown
This Parliament of Women
The free and noble matrons
Of the old Athenian town
Cr O yes! O yes!
Pray ye the Olympian Gods—and Goddesses
And all the Pythian Gods—and Goddesses
And all the Delian Gods—and Goddesses
And all the other Gods—and Goddesses
Whoso is disaffected ill-disposed
Towards this commonwealth of womankind
Or with Euripides or with the Medes
Deals to the common hurt of womankind
Or aims at tyranny or fain would bring
The Tyrant back or dares betray a wife
For palming off a baby as her own
Or tells her master tales against her mistress
Or does not bear a message faithfully
Or being a suitor makes a vow and th n
Fails to perform or being a rich old woman
Hires for herself a lover with her wealth
Or being a girl takes gifts and cheats the giver
Or being a trading man or trading woman
Gives us short measure in our drinking cups
Perish that man himself and all his house
But pray the Gods—and Goddesses—to order
To all the women always all things well
Ch We also pray
And trust it may
Be done as thou premisest
And hope that they
Will win the day
Whose words are best and wisest.
But they who fain
Would cheat for gain,
Their solemn oaths forgetting
Our ancient laws
And noble cause
And mystic rites upsetting
Who plot for greed
Who call the Mede
With secret invitation
I say that these
The Gods displease
And wrong the Athenian nation
O Zeus most high
In earth and sky
All powerful all commanding
We pray to Thee
Weak women we
But help us notwithstanding
Cr O yes! O yes! The Women s Council Board
Hath thus enacted (moved by Sostrata
President Timocleia clerk Lysilla)
To hold a morning Parliament to-day
When women most have leisure to discuss
What shall be done about Euripides
How best to serve him out for that he s guilty
We all admit Who will address the meeting?
1st Woman I wish to I
Cr Put on this chaplet first
Order! Order! Silence ladies if you please
She s learnt the trick she hems and haws
she coughs in preparation
I know the signs my soul divines
a mighty long oration
1st W 'Tis not from any feeling of ambition
I rise to address you ladies but because
I long have seen and inly burned to see
The way Euripides insults us all
The really quite interminable scoffs
This market gardener s son pours out against us
I don t believe that there s a single fault
He s not accused us of I don t believe
That there s a single theatre or stage
But there is he calling us double-dealers
False faithless tippling mischief making gossips
A rotten set a misery to men
Well what s the consequence?
The men come home
Looking so sour—O *we* can see them peeping
In every closet thinking friends are there
Upon my word we can t do *anything*
We used to do he has made the men so silly
Suppose I m hard at work upon a chaplet
Hey she s in love with somebody suppose
I chance to drop a pitcher on the floor
And straightway tis For whom was that intended?
I warrant now for our Corinthian friend
Is a girl ill? Her brother shakes his head
'The girl s complexion is not to my taste
Why if you merely want to hire a baby
And palm it off as yours you ve got no chance
They sit beside our very beds they do
Then there s another thing the rich old men
Who used to marry us are grown so shy
We never catch them now and all because

Euripides declares, the scandal m er
A ld man wed try at not a wife "
You know my sisters, how they mew us up
Guarding our women's room th bolts and seals
And fierce Molossian dogs. That's all his doing
B might pass, with that but O my friends,
O little special perquisites, the corn,
The oil the wine gone all gone forever
They've got such keys, our husband ha e, such
ke s,
Laconian made, with triple rows of teeth
Then in old times we only had to bu
A little ... pantry-doors flew open.
But now this wretch Euripides has made them
Wear such worm-eaten perforated seals,
That breaking now t ... it. Therefore, ladies,
What I propose is that we s... th man,
Either by poison or some other way
Somehow or other h must die the death.
That all I'll say in public I'll write out
A formal motion with the clerkess there

Ch. Good heavens! what force and tact combined!
O ... a many-wo en mind!
A better speech, upon my word
I don't believe I ever heard.
Her thoughts so clea dissected,
Her words so well selected,
Such keen discrimination,
Such power and elevation
Twas really quite a grand, superb
magnificent oration.
So that if, in opposition,
Xenocles came forth to speak,
Compared with he
You'd all agree
All his grandest, happiest effort
are immeasurably weak!

2nd Woman. Ladies, I've only a few words to add.
I quite agree with the honourable lady
Who has just sat down she has spoken well and
ably
But I can tell you what I have born myself.
My husband died in Cyprus, leaving me
F... little chicks to work and labour for
I've done my best and bad's the best but still
I fed them weaving chaplets for the Gods
But now this fellow writes his plays, and says
There are no Gods and so, you may depend
My trade is fallen ... half men won't buy chaplets.
So then for many reason he must die
The man is bitterer than his mother's potherbs.
I leave my cause with you, my sisters I
Am called away on urgent private business.
An order just received, for twenty chaplets.

Ch. Better and better still.
A subtler intellect, daintier skill.
Wise her words, and few
Well timed and spoken too.
A ... woven mind she too has got I find
And h must clearly
This rascal man, be punished most severely

The motion for putting Euripides to death has been proposed and seconded
Mnesilochus rises to speak in opposition.

M. Mrs. Speaker and ladies,
I'm not surprised of course I'm not surprised
To find you all so angry and agrieved
At what Euripides has said against us.
For I myself—or slay my babies I—
Hate him like poison to be sure I do
He's most provoking I admit he is.
But now we're all alone there's no reporter
All among friends, why not be fair and candid?
Grant that the man has really found us out
And told a thing or two, sure they're all *true*
And there are many thousand still behind
For I myself, to mention no one else
Could tell a thousand plaguy tricks I played
On my poor husband I'll just mention one
We'd been but three days married I'm abed,
Husband asleep beside me when my lover
(I'd been familiar with him from a child)
Came softly scratching at the outer door
I hear I know the little cautious sound "
And rise up stealthily to creep downstairs.
Where go you, pray?" says husband "Where!"
says I
I've such dreadful pain in my inside
I must go down this instant" "Go," says he.
He pounds his anise, juniper and sage
To still my pains I seize the water jug
And wet the hinge to still its creaking noise,
Then open, and go out and I and lover
Meet by Agyieus and his laurel shade
Billing and cooing to our hearts content

(*With energy*) Euripides has never found out
that.
Nor how a wife contrived to smuggle out
Her frightened lover holding up her shawl
To the sun's rays for husband to admire
Nor how we grant our favours to bargees
And muleteers, if no one else we've got
Nor how arising from a night's debauch
We chew our garlic, that our husbands, coming
Back from the walls at daybreak, may suspect
Nothing amiss at home Then what's the odds
If he does rail at Phaedra? Let him rail.
What's that to us Let him rail on, say I.
Phaedra indeed! He might come nearer home.
I knew a woman I won't mention names,
Remained ten days in childbirth. Why do you
think?
Because she couldn't buy a baby sooner
Her husband runs to every medicine man
In dreadful agitation while he's out,
They bring a little baby in a basket
Bung its mouth up that it mayn't cry out,
And stow it safe away till he comes home.
Then at a given sign she feebly says,
My time is come please, husband go away "
He goes they open basket baby cries.
O what delight surprise, congratulation!
The man runs in the nurse comes running out
(The same that brought the baby in the basket)

A prodigy! a Lion! such a boy!
Your form your features just the same expression
Your very image lucky lucky man!
Don t we do this? By Artemis we do
Then wherefore rail we at Euripides?
We re not one bit more sinned against than sinning
Ch What a monstrous strange proceeding!
Whence I wonder comes her breeding?
From what country shall we seek her
Such a bold audacious speaker?
That a woman so should wrong us
Here among us here among us
I could never have believed it
such a thing was never known
But what *may* be no man knoweth
And the wise old proverb showeth
That perchance a poisonous sophist
lurketh under every stone
O nothing nothing in the world
so hateful you will find
As shameless women save of course
the rest of womankind
1st W What can possess us sisters mine?
I vow by old Agraulus
We re all bewitched or else have had
some strange mischance befall us
To let this shameless hussy tell
her shameful bold improper
Unpleasant tales and we not make
the least attempt to stop her
If anyone assist me good if not alone we ll try
We ll strip and whip her well we will
my serving maids and I
Mn Not strip me gentle ladies sure
I heard the proclamation
That every freeborn woman now
might make a free oration
And if I spoke unpleasant truths
on this your invitation
Is that a reason why I now
should suffer castigation?
1st W It is indeed how dare you plead
for him who always chooses
Such odious subjects for his plays
on purpose to abuse us?
Phaedras and Melanippes too
but ne er a drama made he
About the good Penelope
or such like virtuous lady
Mn The cause I know the cause I ll show
you won t discover any
Penelope alive to-day but Phaedras very many
1st W You will? you dare? how *can* we bear
to hear such things repeated
Such horrid dreadful odious things?
Mn O I ve not near completed
The things I know I ll give the whole
I m not disposed to grudge it
1st W You can t I vow you ve emptied now
your whole disgusting budget
Mn No not one thousandth part I ve told
not even how we take
The scraper from the bathing room
and down the corn we rake
And push it in and tap the bin
1st W Confound you and your slanders!
Mn Nor how the Apaturian meat
we steal to give our panders,
And then declare the cat was there
1st W You nasty telltale you!
Mn Nor how with deadly axe a wife
her lord and master slew
Another drove her husband mad
with poisonous drugs fallacious
Nor how beneath the reservoir
the Acharnian girl—
1st W Good gracious!
Mn Buried her father out of sight
1st W Now really this won t do
Mn Nor how when late your servant bare
a child as well as you
You took her boy and in his stead
your puling girl you gave her
1st W O by the Two[1] this jade shall rue
her insolent behaviour
I ll comb your fleece you saucy minx
Mn By Zeus you had best begin it
1st W Come on!
Mn Come on!
1st W You will? you will?
(*Flinging her upper mantle to* PHILISTA)
Hold this my dear a minute
Mn Stand off or else by Artemis
I ll give you such a strumming—
Ch For pity s sake be silent there
I see a woman coming
Who looks as if she d news to tell
Now prithee both be quiet
And let us hear the tale she brings
without this awful riot
Enter CLEISTHENES *dressed as a woman*
Cleisthenes Dear ladies I am one with you in heart
My cheeks unfledged bear witness to my love
I am your patron aye and devotee
And now for lately in the market place
I heard a rumour touching you and yours
I come to warn and put you on your guard
Lest this great danger take you unawares
Ch What now my child? for we may call thee child
So soft and smooth and downy are thy cheeks
Cl Euripides they say has sent a cousin
A bad old man amongst you here to-day
Ch O why and wherefore and with what design?
Cl To be a spy a horrid treacherous spy
A spy on all your purposes and plans
Ch O how should he be here, and we not know it?
Cl Euripides has tweezered him and singed him
And dressed him up disguised in women s clothes

[1] Demeter and Persephone

M. (*squirms about with a lively recollection of his recent sufferings*)
I don't believe it, not one word of it.
No man would let himself be tweezered so.
M. Goddesses, I don't believe there's one.
Cl. Nonsense! I never should have come here else.
I had it on the best authority.
Ch. This is a most important piece of news.
We'll take immediate steps to clear this up;
We'll search him out, we'll find his lurking place.
Zounds, if we catch him! ... the rascal man!
Will you, kind gentleman, assist the search?
Gives fresh cause to thank you, patron mine.
Cl. (*to First Woman*) Well, who are you?
Mn. (*aside*) Wherever can I flee?
Cl. I'll find him, trust me.
M. (*aside*) Here's a precious scrape! *
1st W. Who? I?
Cl. Yes, you.
1st W. Cleonymus's wife.
Cl. Do you know her, ladies? Is she speaking truth?
Ch. O yes, we know her; pass to someone else.
Cl. Who's this young person with the baby here?
1st W. O she's my nursemaid.
M. (*aside*) Here he comes. I'm done for.
Cl. Hey! where's she off to? Stop! Why, what the mischief!
Ch. (*aside to Cleisthenes*) Yes, sift her well, discover who she is.
We know the others, but we don't know her.
Cl. Come, come, no shuffling, madam, turn this way.
M. (*fretfully*) Don't pull me so, I'm poorly.
Cl. Please to tell me
Your husband's name.
Mn. My husband's name? My husband's?
Why What-d'ye-call-him from Cothocidae.
Cl. Eh, what? (*Considers*)
There was a What-d'ye-call-him once—
Mn. He's Who-d'ye-call-it's son.
Cl. You're trifling with me.
Have you been here before?
Mn. O bless you, yes.
Why every year.
Cl. And with what tent-companion?
M. With What's-her-name.
Cl. This is sheer idling, woman.
1st W. (*to Cleisthenes*) Step back, sir, please, and let me question her
On last year's mysteries; a little further, please;
No *man* must listen now.
(*To Mnesilochus*) Now, stranger, tell me
What first we practised on that holy day.
M. Bless me, what was it? First, why, first we—drank.
1st W. Right; what was second?
Mn. Second? Drank again.
1st W. Somebody's told you this. But what was third?
Mn. Well, third, Xenylla had a drop too much.
1st W. Ah, that won't do. Here, Cleisthenes, approach.
This is the *man* for certain.

Cl. Bring him up.
(*Mnesilochus is seized, carried before a jury of matrons, and pronounced a man! A general uproar ensues*)
1st W. Strip off his clothes! for there's no truth in him.
Mn. What! strip the mother of nine little ones?
Cl. Loosen that belt, look sharp, you shameless thing.
1st W. She does appear a stout and sturdy one;
Upon my word, she has no breasts like ours.
Mn. Because I'm barren, never had a child.
1st W. Yes, but *then* you had nine little ones!
Cl. Stand up and show yourself. See! he's a man!
1st W. O this is why you mocked and jeered us so!
* And dared defend Euripides like that!
O villain, villain!
M. Miserable me!
I've put my foot in it, and no mistake.
1st W. What shall we do with him?
Cl. Surround him here
And watch him shrewdly that he 'scape you not.
I'll go at once and summon the police.
CLEISTHENES *goes out*

Chorus

Light we our torches, my sisters,
and manfully girding our robes,
Gather them sternly about us,
and casting our mantles aside
On through the tents and the gangways,
and up by the tiers and the rows,
Eyeing and probing and testing
where men would be likely to hide.

Now 'tis time, 'tis time, my sisters,
round and round and round to go
Soft with light and airy footfall,
creeping, peeping, high and low.
Look about in each direction,
make a rigid close inspection,
Lest in any hole or corner
other rogues escape detection.
Hunt with care, here and there,
Searching, spying, poking, prying,
up and down, and everywhere.

For if once the evil-doer we can see,
He shall soon be a prey to our vengeance to-day,
And to all men a warning he shall be
Of the terrible fate that is sure to await
The guilty sin-schemer and lawless blasphemer.
And then he shall find that the Gods are not blind
To what passes below;
Yea, and all men shall know
It is best to live purely, uprightly, securely,
It is best to do well,
And to practise day and night
what is orderly and right,
And in virtue and in honesty to dwell.

But if anyone there be who a wicked deed shall do
In his raving and his raging
and his madness and his pride
Every mortal soon shall see
aye and every woman too
What a doom shall the guilty one betide
For the wicked evil deed
hall be recompensed with speed
The Avenger doth not tarry to begin
Nor delayeth for a time
but He searcheth out the crime
And He punisheth the sinner in his sin

Now we ve gone through every corner
every nook surveyed with care
And there s not another culprit
skulking lurking anywhere

Just as the CHORUS *are concluding their search* MNESILOCHUS *snatch s the* FIRST WOMAN*s baby from her arms and takes refuge at the altar*

1st W Hoy! Hoy there! Hoy!
He s got my child he s got my darling O!
He s snatched my little baby from my breast
O stop him stop him! O he s gone O! O!

Mn Aye weep! you ne er shall dandle him again
Unless you loose me Soon shall these small limbs
Smit with cold edge of sacrificial knife
Incarnadine this altar

1st W O! O! O!
Help women help me Sisters help I pray
Charge to the rescue shout and rout and scout him
Don t see me lose my baby my one pet

Ch Alas! Alas!
Mercy o me! what do I see?
What can it be?
What will deeds of shameless violence
never never never end?
What s the matter what s he up to
what s he doing now my friend?

Mn Doing what I hope will crush you
out of all your bold assurance

Ch Zounds his words are very dreadful
more than dreadful past endurance

1st W Yes indeed they re very dreadful
and he s got my baby too

Ch Impudence rare! Look at him there
Doing such deeds and I vow and declare
Never minding or caring—

Mn Or likely to care

1st W Here you are come here you shall stay
Never again shall you wander away
Wand r away glad to display
All the misdeeds you have done us to-day
But dear you shall pay

Mn There at least I m hoping ladies,
I shall find your words untrue

Ch What God do you think his assistance will lend
You wicked old man to escort you away?

Mn Aha but I ve captured your baby my friend
And I shan t let her go for the best you can say

Ch But no by the Goddesses Twain
Not long shall our threats be in vain
Not long shall you flout at our pain
Unholy your deeds and you ll find
That we shall repay you in kind
And perchance you will alter your mind
When Fate veering round like the blast
In its clutches has seized you at last
Very fast
Comrades haste collect the brushwood
pile it up without delay
Pile it heap it stow it throw it
burn and fire nd roast and slay

1st W Come Mania come let s run and fetch the fagots
(To MNESILOCHUS*)* Ah wretch you ll be a cinder before night

Mn *(Busily engaged in unpacking the baby)*
With all my heart Now I ll undo these wrappers,
These Cretan long clothes and remember darlin
It s all your mother that has served you thus
What have we here? a flask and not a baby!
A flask of wine for all its Persian slippers
O ever thirsty ever tippling women
O ever ready with fresh schemes for drink
To vintners what a blessing but to us
And all our goods and chattels what a curse!

1st W Drag in the fagots Mania pile them up

Mn Aye pile away but tell me is this baby
Really your own?

1st W *My very flesh and blood*

Mn Your flesh and blood?

1st W By Artemis it is

Mn Is it a pint?

1st W O what have you been doing?
O you have stripped my baby of its clothes
Poor tiny morsel!

Mn *(holding up a large bottle)* Tiny?

1st W Yes indeed

Mn What is its age? Three Pitcher feasts or four?

1st W Well thereabouts a little over now
Please give it back

Mn No thank you not exactly

1st W We ll burn you then

Mn O burn me by all means
But anyhow I ll sacrifice this victim

1st W O! O! O!
Make *me* your victim anything you like
But spare the child

Mn A loving mother truly
But this dear child must needs be sacrificed

1st W My child! my child! give me the bason Mania
I ll catch my darling s blood at any rate

Mn And so you shall I'll not deny you that
Puts the bottle to his lips and drains every drop taking care that none shall fall into the bason which the FIRST WOMAN *is holding underneath*

1st W You spiteful man! you most ungenerous man!

Mn. This skin, fair priestess, is your perq site
1st. W. What is my perquisite?
Mn. This skin fa r pr estess.
Another woma c ritylla n u *enters*
Critylla. O Mica who has robbed thee of thy flower
And snatched thy babe thine only o e away?
1st. W. This villain here but I m so glad you re come
You see he doesn t run away while I
Call th police with Cleisthenes, to help us. *Exit*
M (*will queer*) O me, what h pe of safety still remains?
What plan? what strata m? My worthy cousin
Who first in ol ed me in this d eadful *scrape*
H cometh not. S ppos. I send h m word
B t how to send it? Hah, I know a tri k
Out of his *Palamede*? I ll send a messa e
W tt n on oar blades. Tush! I e got no oar blades.
What shall I do for oar blades? Why not send
These voti e slabs instead? The ers th
Oar blades are wood and slabs a e wood I ll try
(*Writes, among he does so*)
Now for the trick fingers be qui k
Do hat you ca for my notable plan
Slab ha the grace t *permit me to trace*
G oo es ith my knif o your bea tif l face.
The tal of my woe it is yours for t show
O o, what a furrow! I ne er did see
Such a horrible a as I mad it t be.
Well, that must d so fl away ou,
Hither and thither off ff and way
Do not dela for moment, I pray
All the actors leave the stage but mnesilochus *is* *a*ble *to leave and* critylla *remains to keep watch*

Chorus

Now let us turn t th peopl
ou own panegyri to render
Men never peak a good word
n er one, for the feminine gender
E ery one says we r a Plague,
th sou e of all evils to man,
War dissension, and strif
Come, answer me this, if you can
Wh if we e *ally* Plague,
you re so xious to ha us for wi es
And charge us not t be peering,
nor t stir out of doors for our li es
Is it t *ally to guard*
Plague wi h such scr ulous care?
Zounds how you ra e, comin home,
if your poor Little wif isn t there.
Should you not rather be glad,
and rejoic all th days of our Li
P lamed wa pe t death befor T o ad hi brother Oeax, writing word the new to his on in Euboea, wrote it po oar-blades which he cast into the sea. The votive slabs are tablets with votive inscriptions.

Rid of a *Plag e* you know
the source of d ssension and strife?
If on a visit we sport
and sleep when the sporting is over
O how you rummage bout
what a fuss, your lost Plague to disco er
E ery one stares at your Plague
if he happens to look on the street
Stares all the m re if your Plague
thinks proper to blush and retreat
Is it not plain then I ask
that Women are really the best?
What can you doubt that we are?
I will br ng it at once to the test
We say Women are best
you men (just like you) den it
N thing on earth is so easy
as to come to the test and *to try it*
I ll take the name of a Man,
and the name of a Woma and show it
Did not Charminus g ve way
to Miss Fortune? Do you not know it?
Is not Cleophon viler
than vile Salabaccho by far?
Is there a Man who can equal,
in matters of glory and war
Lady Victoria M stress
of Marathon queen of the Sea?
Is not Prudence a Woman,
and who s so cle er as she?
Certainly none of your statesmen
who only a twel emonth ago
G ve up their place and their duty
Would women demean themsel es so?
Women don t ride in their coaches,
as Men ha e been doi g of late,
Pock ts and purses d stended
with cash they ha e filched from the State.
We, t the very outside
steal a wee little jorum of corn,
Putting it back in the even,
whatever we took in the morn.

B t this is a true description of you
Are ye not gluttonous, ulgar per erse,
Kidnappers, housebreakers, footpads and worse?
And w in domestic economy too
A e thriftier shiftier wiser than you
For the loom which ou mothers
employed w th such skill,
With ts Shafts and t Thongs,
we are wo king t still.
And the ancient umbr lla by *no means is done,*
We ar wielding it yet,
as our Shield from the Sun.
B t O for the Shafts,
and the Thong of the Shield
Which your F thers *in fight*
were accustomed to wield.
Wher are they to-day?
Ye ha e cast them away

As ye raced in hot haste
and disgraced from the fray!

Many things we have against you
many rules we justly blame
But the one we now will mention
is the most enormous shame
What my masters! ought a lady
who has borne a noble son
One who in your fleets and armies
great heroic deeds has done
Ought she to remain unhonoured?
ought she not I ask you I
In our Stenia and our Scira[1]
still to take precedence high?
Whoso breeds a cowardly soldier
or a seaman cold and tame
Crop her hair and seat her lowly
brand her with the marks of shame
Set the nobler dame above her
Can it all ye Powers be right
That Hyperbolus s mother
flowing haired and robed in white
Should in public places sit by
Lamachus s mother s side
Hoarding wealth and lending monies
gathering profits far and wide?
Sure twere better every debtor
calm resolving not to pay
When she comes exacting money
with a mild surprise should say
Keeping principal and income You to claim
percentage due!
Sure a son so capital is *capital* enough for you

The close of the Parabasis finds the position of MNESILOCHUS *unaltered The dispatch of the tablets has so far produced no result*

Mn I ve strained my eyes with watching but my
poet
He cometh not Why not? Belike he feels
Ashamed of his old frigid *Palamede*
Which is the play to fetch him? O I know
Which but his brand new *Helen?* I ll be Helen
I ve got the woman s clothes at all events
Cr *What are you plotting?* What is that you re
muttering?
I ll Helen you my master if you don t
Keep quiet there till the policeman comes
Mn (*as Helen*) These are the fair nymphed
waters of the Nile
Whose floods bedew in place of heavenly
showers
Egypt s white plains and black-dosed citizens
Cr Sweet shining Hecate what a rogue it is
Mn Ah not unknown my Spartan fatherland
Nor yet my father Tyndareus
Cr My gracious!
Was *he* your father? Sure Phrynondas was.
Mn And I was Helen

Cr What again a woman?
You ve not been punished for your first freak yet
Mn Full many a soul by bright Scamander s
stream
Died for my sake
Cr Would yours had died among them!
Mn And now I linger here but Menelaus,
My dear dear lord ah wherefore comes he not?
O sluggish crows to spare my hapless life!
But soft! some hope is busy at my heart
A laughing hope—O Zeus deceive me not

EURIPIDES *enters disguised as Menelaus*

Eu Who is the lord of this stupendous pile?
Will he extend his hospitable care
To some poor storm tossed shipwrecked mariners?
Mn These are the halls of Proteus.
Eu Proteus are they?
Cr O by the Twain he lies like anything
I knew old Protteas he s been dead these ten years
Eu Then whither whither have we steered our
bark?
Mn To Egypt
Eu *O the weary weary way!*"
Cr Pray don t believe one single word he says
This is the holy temple of the Twain
Eu Know you if Proteus be at home or not?
Cr Why don t I tell you he s been dead these
ten years!
You can t have quite got over your sea sickness,
Asking if Protteas be at home or not
Eu Woe s me! is Proteus dead? and where s he
buried?
Mn This is his tomb whereon I m sitting now
Cr O hang the rascal and he *shall* be hanged!
How dare he say this altar is a tomb?
Eu And wherefore sitt st thou on this monu
ment
Veiled in thy mantle lady?
Mn They compel me
A weeping bride to marry Proteus son
Cr Why do you tell the gentleman such fibs?
Good gentleman he s a bad man he came
Among the women here to steal their trinkets
Mn Aye aye rail on revile me as you list
Eu Who is the old woman who reviles you
lady?
Mn Theonoe Proteus daughter
Cr What a story!
Why I m Critylla of Gargettus sir
A very honest woman
Mn Aye speak on
But never will I wed thy brother no
I won t be false to absent Menelaus
Eu What lady what? O raise those orbs to
mine
Mn O sir I blush to raise them with these
cheeks
Eu O dear O dear I cannot speak for trembling
Ye Gods is t possible? Who art thou lady?
Mn O who art thou? I feel the same myself
Eu Art thou Hellenic or a born Egyptian?
Mn Hellenic I O tell me what art thou

[1] Women s feasts.

Eu "O surely surely thou art Helen's self.
Mn "O from th g eens thou must be Menelaus."
Eu Yes, yes, you see that miserable man
Mn O lon in coming to these lo ging arms,
O carry me carry me from this place
O wrap me in thy close embrace
O, carry me carry me, carry me home,
by this fond a d l ing kiss,
O tak me, take me take me hence"
Cr I say now none of this.
Let go there, or I'll strike you with this l nk!
Eu Let go my wife, the child of Tyndareus,
Not take her home to Sparta? O what mean you?
Cr O that s it is it? You re a bad one too!
Both for e ga That what your gipsying meant!
Both at any rat shall meet his due.
Here the policeman, and the Scythian coming
Eu Ah, thi won t do I must slip off while
Mn And what am I to do?
Eu Keep quiet here
Be sure I'll never fail you wh le I li e
I ha e ten thousand tri ks to sa e y u yet
Mn Well, you ca ght n thi g by th t haul I think

The high official, h her ir dequa ly called POLICEM *n* *ow enters upon the s ge attended by of the Scy hia a her*

Policeman O arche her the rabond of hom Cleisth es told us.
(*to* SCYTHIAN ARCHER) Why do y u ha your head?
(*to* SCYTHIAN) Tak him within th e tie him on th plank
Then bring him her and watch him. Let n t a y
Approach too ear him should th y try to, take
The hip and smite them.
Cr Aye, one came but now
Spinnin hi yarns, and all b t got him off
Mn O sir! pol ma I grant m on request,
O b that hand I pray ou, wh h you lo e
T hold out empty and t draw back full.
Po What hould I grant you?
Mn Don t expose me thus
Do tell the Scythian h may tr p me first
Don t l t a poo old man in silks and snoods,
Pro ke the la ghter t th e ows that eat him.
Po Thus hath the Council ordered t that so
The passers-by may see th rogue yo a e
Mn Alas! la ! O y ll w silk I hat ye!
O l no h pe, h pe f gettin free.

All the acto leave the stag A d the CHORUS *com mence their gr t ceremo al worship f dance nd song*

Choru

Now for the ls, my si t rs,
which we to the great Twain Powers
Prayerfully car fully raise
n the holy fest al hours.
And Pauson will join in our orship to-day,
And Pauson will join in the fastin
And, keen for th fa t, to th Twain he will pray
For the rit to be mad erlasting I ween
For the rite to be made everlasting

Now ad ance
In the whirling twirling dance,
With hand linked in hand as we deftly trip along
Keeping time to the cadence
of the swiftly flowing song
And be sure as we g
That we dart careful glances,
up and down and to and fro.

Now us ours
To entwine our cho cest flowers,
Flowers of song and adoration
to the great Olympian Powers.

Nor expect
That the ga land will be flecked
With abuse of mortal men
such a thought is incorrect

For with prayer
And with sacred lo ing care
A new and h ly measure we w ll heedf lly prepare

To the h gh and holy M nstrel
Let the dancers o wa d go,
And to Artemis, the maiden
Of th quiver and the bow
O hear us, Far-controller and the ctory bestow
And w trust our merry music
Will the matron Hera please
For h l es the pleasant Chorus
And th da ces su h these
—Wearin at h girdle
The holy n ptial k ys.

To Pan and pastoral He mes
And the friendly Nymphs we pray
That they mile with graci us fa our
On ou fest al to-day
With their la hter lo ing glan es
beam g bri htly on our Play
As we dance the Double cho us
To the old familiar strain
As we wea e our ancient pastime
On our h ly day again
—Keeping fa t and v ml
In the Temple of the Twain.

Turn the step and chan e the measure,
Raise lofti musi now
Com the Lord f w n and pleasure
E oi B cchus, lead us thou!

Yea for Thee w adore!
Child of Sem le thee
W th thy glittering i y w eaths,
Thee w th music and song
E er and e er we praise.

Apollo.

Thee with thy wood nymphs delightedly singing
Evoi! Evoi! Evoi!

Over the joyous hills
the sweet strange melody ringing
Hark! Cithaeron resounds
Pleased the notes to prolong
Hark! the bosky ravines
And the wild slopes thunder and roar
Volleying back the song
Round thee the ivy fair
With delicate tendril twines

The SCYTHI N *brings* MNESILOCHUS *in fastened to his plank and sets it up on the stage*

Scythian Dere now bemoany to de ouder air
Mn O I entreat you
Sc Nod endread me zu
Mn Slack it a little
Sc Dat is vat I does
Mn O mercy! mercy! O you drive it tighter
Sc Dighder zu wiss him?
Mn Miserable me!
Out on you villain
Sc Zilence bad ole man
I se fetch de mad an vatch zu comfibly
Mn These are the joys Euripides has brought me!

EURIPIDES *makes a momentary appearance in the character of Perseus*

O Gods! O Saviour Zeus! there s yet a hope
Then he won t f il me! Out he flashed as Perseus
I understand the signals I m to act
The fair Andromeda in chains Ah well
Here are the chains worse luck wherewith to act her
He ll come and succour me he s in the wings

(*Euripides enters singing airily*)

Eu Now to peep now to creep
Soft and slily through
Maidens pretty maidens
Tell me what I am to do
Tell me how to glide
By the Scythian Argus eyed
And to steal away my bride
Tell me tell me tell me tell me
tell me tell me tell
Echo always lurking in the cavern and the dell

EURIPIDES *retires and* MNESILOCHUS *commences a Euripidean monody mostly composed of quotations from the* Andromeda *adapted to his own position*

Mn A cold unpitying heart had he
Who bound me here in misery
Hardly escaped from mouldy dame
I m caught and done for just the same
Lo the Scythian guard beside me
Friendless helpless here he tied me
Soon upon these limbs of mine
Shall the greedy ravens dine
Seest thou? not to me belong
Youthful pleasures dance and song
Never never more shall I
With my friends sweet law suits try
But woven chains with many a link surround me
Till Glaucetes that ravening whale has found me
Home I nevermore shall see
Bridal songs are none for me
Nought but potent incantations
Sisters raise your lamentations
Woe woe woeful me
Sorrow and trouble and misery
Weeping weeping endless weeping
Far from home and all I know
Praying him who wronged me so
O! O! Woe! woe!
First with razor keen he hacks me
Next in yellow silk he packs me
Sends me then to dangerous dome
Where the women prowl and roam
O heavy Fate! O fatal blow!
O woeful lot! and lots of woe!
O how they will chide me
and gibe and deride me!
And O that the flashing and roaring and dashing
Red bolt of the thunder
might smite me in sunder—
The Scythian who lingers beside me!
For where is the joy of the sunshine and glow
To one who is lying distracted and dying
With throat cutting agonies
riving him driving him
Down down to the darkness below

A voice is heard from behind the scenes It is the voice of ECHO

Echo O welcome daughter but the Gods destroy
Thy father Cepheus who exposed thee thus
Mn O who art thou that mournest for my woes?
Ec Echo the vocal mocking bird of son
I who last year in these same lists contended
A faithful friend beside Euripides
And now my child for thou must play thy part
Make dolorous wails
Mn And you wail afterwards?
Ec I ll see to that only begin at once
Mn O Night most holy
O er dread Olympu vast and far
In thy dark car
Thou journeyest slowly
Through Ether ridged with many a star
Ec With many a star
Mn Why on Andromeda ever must flow
Sorrow and woe?
Ec Sorrow and woe?
Mn Heavy of fate
Ec Heavy of fate
Mn Old woman you ll kill me I know with your prate
Ec Know with your prate
Mn Why how tiresom you are you are going too far
Ec You are going too far
Mn Good friend if you kindly will leave me in peace
You ll do me a favour O prithee cease
Ec Cease.

Sc O go to the crows!
Ec O go to the crows!
M Wh can t you be st ll?
Ec Why can t y u be st ll?
M (mcefully) Old gossip!
Ec (uef lly) Old gossip!
M Lackaday!
Ec Lackaday!
Mn And alas!
E And alas!
The scythian suddenly a akes to the fact that his prisoner is taking part in a conversation
Sc O vat does zu say?
E O vat does zu say?
Sc I'se calls de police.
Ec I se calls de police.
Sc V t nosense is dis?
Ec Vat nosense is d s?
Sc V y ere is de voice?
E V y ere is de voice?
Sc (t sevensploches) Vos id zu?
Ec Vos id zu?
Sc Zu'll catch id.
Ec Zu'll catch id
Sc Does zu mocksh?
Ec Does zu mocksh?
M Tis t I declare it is that woman there.
Ec It is that woman th re
Sc V y vere is de wretch?
M mush catch me mush cat h
Her s a gone h r s a fled
Ec Her s a gone her s fled
Sc Zu'll a suffer for dis.
Ec Zu ll a uffer for d s.
Sc V t main?
Ec V t aga ?
Sc *Zee* ol o d mu.
Ec Zeeg ol o d mi
Sc Vat a babbled an talket ng ooman
zen io s enter in the guise of Perseus
Eu Ah me what w ld and te rible ra t this?
Pl in th path ess t with w nged feet
S eer g to A gos bean n my hand
Th Gorgon head—
Sc V t d t zu say o Gorgo?
Dat zu has g t d wit Gorg hea l?
Eu Gor on I say
Sc A me sa Corgo too
Eu Alas, ha era is th nd lasted upon t
What must bea t t a shapes d me
Alo e lv e t too ud l moored
M O stra ge
Pit F sor of a poo ou w ma
And loose m bonds.
Sc V d a no be q et?
V t kee talk r goin t d e?
Eu Fai g l I w p t see thee ha g there
Sc Dish on gal l on ol La ma
V n vare bod rascal t ll w
Eu Sc h pea l
Th And omeda K g Cepheus da ht r
Sc Von dawd l Dis Var ob ous ma metinks.

Eu O reach thy hand and let me cla p my lo e
O Scythian reach Ah me what passionate storm
Toss n men s souls and as for mine, O Lady
Thou art my love!
Sc M nod admire zure dasde
Shill zu may tiss her if zu wiss id dere
Eu Hard hearted Scythian give me up my love
And I will take her—take her a e to wife
Sc T ss her me sa s me nod objex to dat
Eu Ah me I'll loose her bonds.
Sc Zu bedder nod
Eu Ah me I will.
Sc Den me se cut off zu e hea l
Me draw de cudless, and zu d e zu dead
Eu Ah what avails me? Shall I make a speech?
His sa age nature could not take it n
True w t and wisdom were but labour lost
On such a rude barbarian I mu t try
Som more appropriate fitter stratagem
He g es o t
Sc O de le o ! He jocket me are near
Mn O Perseus, Perseus, wilt thou lea e me so?
Sc Vat does zu a k n for de vip again?

Chorus

Palla we call upon
Chastest and purest one
Maiden and V min our
Re els to see
Guard ng our portal
Alone of Immortals,
M ghtil potently
Keeping the key
Hater of Tyranny
Come fo we call thee, we
Women in Chorus.
B ng Peace aga with thee
Jocundly merrily
Long t reign o er u.

Sacred earthly ones,
Awfullest Shades,
Graciously peacef ll
Com to our g ades.
Man mu t not gaze n the
Rites at your h n
Torch gl mme flashing o er
Feat res d ine
Come for w re pourin
Impor ng ad ri g
Intense n rat
Dawn on you wor hippers,
G ers of Hom nd our
C l zat n

urip comes i dressed as an ld m sic wom n

Eu Lad es I offer te ms. If well and truly
Your honourabl sex befr end me now
I won t buse you honourable sex
F om thi t me f rth fore er This I offer

Ch (*suspiciously*) But what s your object in proposing this?
Eu That poor old man there he s my poor old cousin
Let him go free and nevermore will I
Traduce your worthy sex but if you won t
I ll meet your husbands coming from the Wars
And put them up to all your goings on
Ch We take your terms so far as we re concerned
But you yourself must manage with the Scythian
Eu I ll manage *him* Now Hop o my thumb come forward
A dancing girl enters
And mind the things I taught you on the way
Hold up your frock skip lightly through the dance
The Persian air Teredon if you please
Sc Vy vat dis buzbuz? revels come dis vay?
Eu She s going to practise Scythian that is all
She s got to dance in public by and by
Sc Yesh practish yesh Hoick! how se bobs about!
Now here now dere von vlea upon de planket
Eu Just stop a moment throw your mantle off
Come sit you down beside the Scythian here
And I ll unloose your slippers That will do
We must be moving homeward
Sc May I tiss her?
Eu Once only once
Sc (*kissing her*) O O vat vare sweet tiss!
Dat s vare mo he sweeter dan zure Attish honies
Dooze let me tiss her tecon time ole lady
Eu No Scythian no we really can t allow it
Sc O doozy doozy dear ole lady doozy
Eu Will you give silver for one kiss?
Sc Yesh! yesh!
Eu Well p raps on that consideration Scythian
We won t object but give the silver first
Sc Silver? Vy vere? I se got none Take dis bow cus
Zu vat I call zu?
Eu Artemisia
Sc Yesh Hartomixer
Eu Hillo what s that? She s off
Sc I se fetch her pack zu look to bad ole man
HOP O MY THUMB *runs out* *The* SCYTHIAN *flings his bow case to* EURIPIDES *and runs after her*

Eu O tricky Hermes you befriend me still
Good bye old Scythian catch her if you can
Meanwhile I ll free your prisoner and do you
(*to* MNESILOCHUS) Run like a hero when I ve loosed your bonds,
Straight to the bosom of your family
Mn Trust me for that so soon as these are off
Eu There then they are off now run away before
The Scythian come and catch you
Mn Won t I just!
EURIPIDES *and* MNESILOCHUS *leave the stage They are hardly out of sight when the* SCYTHIAN *returns*
Sc Ole lady here s—vy vere s ole lady fannish?
Vere s dat ole man? O bah I smells de trick
Ole lady dis vare bad o zu ole lady!
Me nod expex dis of zu Bad ole lady Hartomixer!
Bow cusses? Yesh zu von big bow cus boweus.
Vat sall I does? vere can ole lady was?
Hartomixer!
Ch Mean you the ancient dame who bore the lute?
Sc Yesh does zu saw her?
Ch Yes indeed I did
She went *that* way there was an old man with her
Sc Von yellow shilk ole man?
Ch Exactly so
I think you ll catch them if you take *that* road
Sc Vare bad ole lady did se vich vay run?
Hartomixer!
Ch Straight up the hill no no not that direction
They are of course misdirecting him notwithstanding which he seems likely in his flurry to stumble on the right road
You re going wrong see that s the way she went
Sc O dear O dear but Hartomixer runnish
He runs out the wrong way
Ch Merrily merrily merrily on
to your own confusion go
But we ve ended our say
and we re going away
Like good honest women
straight home from the Play
And we trust that the twain
Home givers will deign
To bless with success our performance to-day

THE ECCLESIAZUSAE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRAXAGORA	A CRIER
TWO WOMEN	T EE HAGS
BLEPYR *husband of Pr xagora*	A GIRL
A CITIZEN	A YOUTH
CHREMES	A SERVANT M D OF PRAX GORA
	C ORUS O WO E

The stage represents an Athenia street with three h uses in the background the houses f LEPYRUS CH EMES, nd the h sb d f the ECO D WOMAN The hour is 3 A. M nd th stars are st ll v sible in the sky A young and deca. woman, clad in m scu line attire is stan.. g t the street ha gi g up a ligh d lamp in some cons icu us place The woma is PRAX GORA, the f of Blepyru uh h s just left her h sband asleep within and h s com ut n arrg hi garment with his sturdy u lking stick in her hand and his red Lacon a shoes upo her feet A d the lamp is t ser a a signal t other Athenian omen ho have greed t meet her here before the bre k f d y N ne s yet t sight a d while she is expecting their arriv l she postroph es the lamp in mock heroic style using su h la gu ge as m tr g dy might be a..d sed to the su moo or to some divine or heroic personage

Prax gor O glo ing ist e f the earthen lamp
On thi conspicuou emi ce w ll h g—
(For throu h thy fates and linea e will we go,
Thou, ho, by whi h wheel f potter moulded
Dost with thy ozzle d the sun s bri ht d ts)—
A ak the ppointed signal f th flame!
Thou onl k owest it nd ri htly thou,
For thou a.o e thin our hambers st ndin
W t hest u blamed th m teries of lo e
Thin in pector f our amorou sports,
Behold th all, and n saith Begon !
Thou mest sin er purif in tl
The d m ecesses hich one lse ma see
And h the garners, stored th corn and wine,
B stealth open, thou dost tand beside us.
And though thou knowest all this, thou dost t pea h.
Therefor our plans will we onfide to thee
What at th Scira we esol ed t do
Ah, but ther no one her wh should be here.
Y t d th t draw to ards da b eak and the Assembly
Full soon will meet and we frail woma kind
M st take th seat Phyroma hus signed us
(You don t forget?) and not attract ttent on
What can th matter be? P hanc their beards
Are n t stitched on, as our decree commanded

P chance they found it difficult to steal
Their husband s ga ments. Stay! I see a lamp
M ing this way I will retire and watch
Lest it should haply be some *man* approaching!

She conce ls herself enter FI ST WOM N with l m

1st W ma It is the hour to start A I was comin
I heard the herald g ve his second—crow

PR X GO A reappears

Pr I ha e been wait ng watch g fo you all
The whole night l ng and now I ll summon forth
My neighbo r he e scratching her door so gently
As not to ouse her husband

En er s COND WOM N

2nd W man Yea I heard
(Fo I was up nd putti g on my shoes)
The t althy c eeping f thy finger nail.
My h ba d dear—a Salaminian he—
Ha all night long bee tossin in his bed
Wh refo e I could not steal his garb till ow
1st W O now they ar com ! He s Cleinarete,
Here s Sostrata and here s Ph la te

Enter seven women

Sem Choru Come hurry up for Glyce vowed a ow
That whosoe er comes the last shall pay
One quart of chi kpeas and nine qua ts of wine
1st W And look! M listich Smicy th on s w fe
Wear g her hu band s hoes. She only h
Ha m away methinks, at ase unfl rried
2nd W And look! G usistrata th tapster s wife
In he ri ht hand the to ch.
Pr And now the wi es
Of Philodo etus and Cha retades,
And many another hurryi g on I see
All that is best and worthiest n the t wn
S Ch Oh nev I d tr mendous work t come.
M hu band gorged hi fill of prats t upper
And h s been cough o gh coughing all night long
Pr W ll, sit ye d wn that I may sk y u this,
N w that e e ll ssembled ha e y e d ne
What at the Scira twas esol ed to do?
1st W I ha e f one See unde neath my a ms
Th hair is g owing th cker than a pse,
As twas agreed and when my hu band started

Off to the market place I d oil my body
And stand all day decocting in the sun
2nd W I too have done it flinging first of all
The razor out of doors that so my skin
Might grow quite hairy and unlike a woman
Pr But have ye got the beards which twas
determined
Ye all should bring assembling here to-day?
1st W I have by Hecate! Look! a lovely one
2nd W And I much lovelier than Epicrates s
Pr *And what say ye?*
1st W They nod assent they ve got them
Pr The other matters I perceive are done
Laconian shoes ye ve got and walking sticks
And the men s overcloaks as we desired you
1st W O I ve a splendid club I stole away
(See here it is) from Lamias as he slept
Pr O yes I know the clubs he sweltered with
1st W By Zeus the Saviour he s the very man
To don the skins the All eyed herdsman wore
And no man better tend the—public hangman
Pr But now to finish what remains to do
While yet the stars are lingering in the sky
For this Assembly as you know whereto
We all are bound commences with the dawn
1st W And so it does and we re to seat ourselves
Facing the prytanes just below the speakers
2nd W See what I ve brought dear heart I mean
to do
A little spinning while th Assembly fills
Pr Fills? miserable woman!
2nd W Yes why not?
O I can spin and listen just as well
Besides my little chicks have got no clothes
Pr Fancy you *spinning*! when you must not have
The tiniest morsel of your person seen
Twere a fine scrape if when the Assembly s full
Some woman clambering o er the seats and
throwing
Her cloak awry should show that she s a woman
No if we sit in front and gather round us
Our husbands garments none will find us out
Why when we ve got our flowing beards on there
Who that beholds us will suppose we re women?
Was not Agyrrhius erst a woman? Yet
Now that he wears the beard of Pronomus
He passes for a man a statesman too
O by yon dawning day tis just for that
We women dare this daring deed to do
If we can seize upon the helm of state
And trim the ship to weather through the storm
For neither sails nor oars avail it now
1st W How can the female soul of womankind
Address the Assembly?
Pr Admirably well
Youths that are most effeminate they say
Are always strongest in the *speaking line*
And we ve got that by nature
1st W May be so
Still inexperience is a serious matter
Pr And is not that the very reason why
We ve met together to rehearse the scene?

Now do make haste and fasten on your beards
And all you others who have practised talking
1st W Practised indeed! can t every woman talk?
Pr Come fasten on your beard and be a man
I ll lay these chaplets down and do the same
May be I ll make a little speech myself
2nd W O here sweet love Praxagora look child!
O what a merry joke this seems to me!
Pr Joke! where s the joke?
2nd W Tis just as if we tied
A shaggy beard to toasting cuttlefish
Pr Now Purifier carry round the—cat
Come in! Ariphrades don t chatter so
Come in sit down Who will address the meeting?
1st W I
Pr Wear this chaplet then and luck be with
you
1st W There
Pr Speak away
1st W What speak before I drink?
Pr Just listen *Drink*!
1st W Then what s this chaplet for?
Pr O get away Is this what you d have done
Amongst the men?
1st W What don t men drink at meetings?
Pr Drink fool?
1st W By Artemis I know they do,
And strong drink too Look at the acts they pass
Do you mean to tell me that they d pass such
nonsense
If they weren t drunk? Besides they pour libations
Or what s the meaning of those tedious prayers
Unless they d got some wine I d like to know
Besides they quarrel just like drunken men
And when one drinks too much and gets too noisy
In come the Archer boys and run him out
Pr *Begone and sit you down for you re no good*
1st W Good lack I wish I d never worn a beard
I m parched to death with thirst I really am
Pr Would any other like to speak?
2nd W Yes I
Pr Put on this chaplet and be quick Time
presses
Now lean your weight upon your walking stick
And speak your words out manfully and well
2nd W I could have wished some more experi
enced man
Had risen to speak while I sat still and listened
But now I say I ll not permit for one
That in their taverns men should make them tanks
Of water Tis not proper by the Twain[1]
Pr How! by the Twain? Girl have you lost
your wits?
2nd W Why what s amiss? *I never asked for drink*
Pr You are a man and yet invoked the Twain
All else you said was excellently right
2nd W O yes by Apollo!
Pr Mind then I won t move
Another step in this Assembly business
Unless you are strict and accurate in this

[1]Demeter and Persephone

2nd W. Give me the chaplet and I'll try again.
I've thought of something very good to say
In your opinion, O assembled women,
Pr. O monstrous! women, idiot, when they're men!
2nd W. 'Twas all Epigonus; he caught my eye
And so, methought 'twas women I harangued.
Pr. You, too, retire and sit you down again,
For I myself will wear the chaplet now
Your cause to further; and I pray the Gods
That I may prosper our design.
I have, my friends, an equal stake with you
In this our country and I grieve to note
The sad condition of the State's affairs.
I see the State employing evermore
Unworthy ministers; if one do well
A ... he'll act amiss for ten.
You try another; he'll be ten times worse.
Hard, hard it is to counsel wayward men,
... those who love you best,
And pay court to those who love you not.
There was a time, my friends, we never came
To these Assemblies; then we knew full well
... we come here now
... the man,
... protests that they
Who come for payment ought to die the death.
1st W. By Aphrodite now, but that's well said!
Pr. Heavens! Aphrodite! 'Twere a pleasant jest,
If in the Assembly you should praise me so!
1st W. Ah, but I won't.
Pr. Then don't acquire the habit.
This League,* when first we talked it over
Seemed the only thing to save the State.
Yet when they'd got it, they disliked it. He
Who ... was forced to cut and run.
Our navy be launched: the poor men all approve.
The wealthy men and farmers disapprove.
You used to hate Corinthians, and they you;
They are friendly now: do you be friendly too.
Argeius was a fool: now Jerome's wise.
Safety just showed her face: by Thrasybulus
No more called in, is quite excluded now.
1st W. Here's a shrewd man.
Pr. Ah, now you praise me rightly.
You are to blame for this, Athenian people.
You draw your wages from the public purse,
Yet each man seeks his private gain alone.
So the State reels, like an Aesimus.
Still, if ye trust me, ye shall yet be saved.
I move that now the women should be asked
To rule the State. In our own homes, we know
They are the managers and rule the house.
1st W. O good, good, good! speak on, speak on, dear man.
Pr. That they are better in their ways than we
I'll soon convince you. First, they dye their wools
With boiling tinctures, in the ancient style.
You won't find them, I warrant, in a hurry
Trying new plans. And would it not have saved
The Athenian city had she let alone
Things that worked well, nor idly sought things new?
They roast their barley, sitting, as of old:
They on their heads bear burdens, as of old:
They keep their Thesmophoria, as of old:
They bake their honied cheesecakes, as of old:
They victimize their husbands, as of old:
They still secrete their lovers, as of old:
They buy themselves sly dainties, as of old:
They love their wine unwatered, as of old:
They like a woman's pleasures, as of old:
Then let us, gentlemen, give up to them
The helm of State, and not concern ourselves,
Nor pry nor question what they mean to do;
But let them really govern, knowing this,
The statesman mothers never will neglect
Their soldier sons. And then, a soldier's rations,
Who will supply as well as she who bare him?
For ways and means none can excel a woman.
And there's no fear at all that they'll be cheated
When they're in power, for they're the cheats themselves.
Much I omit. But if you pass my motion,
You'll lead the happiest lives that e'er you dreamed of.
1st W. O good! Praxagora. Well done, sweet wench.
However did you learn to speak so finely?
Pr. I and my husband in the general flight
Lodged in the Pnyx, and there I heard the speakers.
1st W. Ah, you were clever to some purpose, dear:
And if you now succeed in your designs
We'll then and there proclaim you chieftainess.
But what if Cephalus, ill fare, insult you,
How will you answer him in full Assembly?
Pr. I'll say he's frenzied.
2nd W. True enough; but all
The world know that.
Pr. I'll say he's moody mad.
2nd W. They know that too.
Pr. That he's more fit to tinker
The constitution than his pots and pans.
2nd W. If Neocleides, blear-eyed oaf, insult you?
Pr. Peep at a puppy's tail, my lad," quoth I.
2nd W. What if they interrupt?
Pr. I'll meet them there:
I'm quite accustomed to that sort of thing.
2nd W. O but suppose the archers hale you off
What will you do?
Pr. Stick out my elbows, so.
They shan't seize me, the varlets, round my waist.
Semi-Ch. Aye and we'll help: we'll bid the men let go.
2nd W. Then that we've settled, wonderfully well.
But this we've not considered, how to mind
We lift our hands, and not our feet, in voting.
We're more for lifting feet than lifting hands.
Pr. A knotty point. However, we must each
Hold up one arm, bare from the shoulder, so.
Now then, my dears, tuck up your tunics neatly
And slip your feet in those Laconian shoes,
Just as ye've seen your husband do, when e'er

*The anti-Spartan League of 395 B.C.

They re going out mayhap to attend the
Assembly
And next so soon as every thing is right
With shoes and tunics fasten on your beards
And when ye ve got them neatly fitted on
Then throw your husbands mantles over all
Those which ye stole and leaning on your sticks
Off to the Meeting piping as ye go
Some old man s song and mimicking the ways
Of country fellows

1st W Good! but let ourselves
Get on before them other women soon
Will come I know from all the countryside
Straight for the Pnyx

Pr Be quick for tis the rule
That whoso comes not with the early dawn
Must slink abashed with never a doit away

PRAXAGORA and FIRST and SECOND WOMEN depart the rest remain and form the CHORUS

Semi Ch Time to be moving gentlemen!
tis best we keep repeating
This name of ours lest we forget
to use it at the Meeting
For terrible the risk would be if any man detected
The great and daring scheme which we
in darkness have projected

Semi Ch On to the Meeting worthy sirs
for now the magistrate avers
That whoever shall fail to
Arrive while the dusk of the
Morning is grey
All dusty and smacking of
Pickle and acid that
Man shall assuredly
Forfeit his pay
Now Charitimides
Draces and Smicy thus
Hasten along
See that there fall from you
Never a word or a
Note that is wrong
Get we our tickets and
Sit we together and
Choose the front rows
Vote we whatever our
Sisters propose
Our *sisters*! My wits are gone gleaning!
Our brothers of course was my meaning

Enter band of twelve COUNTRYWOMEN

Semi Ch We ll thrust aside this bothering throng
which from the city crowds along
These men who aforetime
When only an obol they
Got for their pay
Would sit in the wreath market
Chatting away
Ah well in the days of our
Noble Myronides
None would have stooped
Money to take for
Attending the meetings but
Hither they trooped
Each with his own little
Goatskin of wine
Each with three olives two
Onions one loaf in his
Wallet to dine
But now they are set
The three obol to get
And whene er the State business engages
They clamour like hodmen for wages

The CHORUS leave the orchestra for a time Enter BLEPYRUS in his wife s dress

Blepyrus What s up? Where s my wife gone? Why
bless the woman
It s almost daybreak and she can t be found
Here am I taken with the gripes abed
Groping about to find my overcloak
And shoes i the dark but hang it they re gone too
I could not find them anywhere Meanwhile
Easums kept knocking hard at my back-door
So on I put this kirtle of my wife s,
And shove my feet into her Persian slippers
Where s a convenient place? or shall I say
All are alike convenient in the dark?
No man can see me here I am sure of that
Fool that I was worse luck to take a wife
In my old age Ought to be thrashed I ought!
Tis for no good I warrant that she s out
This time of night However I can t wait

Enter CITIZEN another husband

Citizen Hey-day! who s this? Not neighbour
Blepyrus?
Sure and it s he himself Why tell me man
What s all that yellow? Do you mean to say
You ve had Cinesias at his tricks again?

Bl No no I wanted to come out and took
This little yellow kirtle of my wife s

Ci But where s your cloak?

Bl I ve not the least idea
I searched amongst the clothes and twasn t there

Ci Did you not ask your wife to find the thing?

Bl I didn t No For why? *She* wasn t there
She s wormed herself away out of the house
Some revolution in the wind I fear

Ci O by Poseidon but your case is just
The same as mine *My* wife has stolen away
And carried off my cloak And that s not all
Hang her she s carried off my shoes as well
At least I could not find them anywhere

Bl No more can I I could not anywhere
Find my Laconians so my case being urgent
I shove her slippers on and out I bolt
For fear I soil my blanket twas a clean one

Ci What can it be? can any of her gossips
Have asked her out to breakfast?

Bl I expect so
She s not a bad one I don t *think* she is

Ci Why man you are paying out a cable I
Must to the Assembly when I ve found my cloak
My missing cloak the only one I ve got

Bl I too when eased but now an acrid pear
Is blocking up the passage of my food

Ci As Thrasybulus told the Spartans eh? *Exit*

Bl. [illegible] Dionysus, but it grips me tight.
[illegible] that [illegible] not all what ever shall I do?
[illegible] how [illegible] good I am soon to eat hereafter
[illegible] find a passage out I can't imagine
[illegible] and close this Achradusian chap
[illegible] fastened [illegible] its path way to the door.
[illegible] fetch doctor and what doctor here?
[illegible] of the [illegible] knows this business best?
[illegible] knows [illegible] perhaps [illegible] won't admit it.
Fetch, fetch Antisthenes, by all means fetch him.
[illegible] the man (to judge from his complaints)
[illegible] know the pangs from which I'm suffering now.
[illegible] Eileithyia, let me not remain
Thus [illegible] and barricaded, nor become
[illegible] stool for the comic stage.

Enter CHREMES, *the other neighbour*

Chremes [illegible] our ease, good neighbour?

Bl. No, I'm not.
'Tis true I have been, but I've finished now.

Chr. O and [illegible] got your lady's kirtle on!

Bl. 'Twas dark indoors I [illegible] hence.
But whence come you?

Chr. I'm coming from the Assembly.

Bl. What, is it over?

Chr. Aye, betimes to-day.
And O dear Zeus, the fun it was to see
[illegible] they [illegible] the vermilion round.

Bl. Got our three-obol?

Chr. No, not I, worse luck.
I was too late. I'm carrying home, ashamed,
This empty wallet, nothing else at all.

Bl. Why, how was that?

Chr. There gathered such a crowd
About the Pnyx, you never saw the like:
Such pale-faced fellows just like shoemakers
We all declared and strange it was to see
How pallid-faced the whole Assembly looked.
So I and lots of us could get no pay.

Bl. Shall I get any if I run?

Chr. Not you!
Not had you been there when the cock was crowing
[illegible] second crow.

Bl. O woe is me, Antilochus,
[illegible] for me, [illegible] than for him.
The loved and lost—three-obol. All is gone!
Whatever was it, though, that brought together
So vast a crowd so early?

Chr. 'Twas determined
[illegible] this question to the assembled people,
"How best to save the State?" So first and foremost
Came Neocleides, groping up to speak.
And all the people shouted out aloud,
"What scandal that this bleareyed [illegible] who cannot
Save his own eyes [illegible]
To come and teach us how to save the State!"
But he cried out, and leered around, and said,
What's to be done?

Bl. "Pound garlic up with verjuice,
Throw in some sprigs of the Laconian spurge,
And rub it on your eyelids every night."
That, what, had I been present, I'd have said.

Chr. Next came [illegible], that accomplished chap,
With nothing on as most of us supposed,
But he himself insisted he was clothed.
He made a popular democratic speech.
"Behold" says he "I am myself in want
Of cash to save me, yet I know the way
To save the citizens, and save the State.
Let every clothier give to all that ask
Warm woollen robes, when first the sun turns back.
No more will pleurisy attack us then.
Let such as own no bed, clothes and no bed,
After they've dined seek out the furriers, there
To sleep, and whoso shuts the door against them
In wintry weather shall be fined three blankets."

Bl. Well said indeed, and never a man would dare
To vote against him, had he added this
"That all who deal in grain shall freely give
Three quarts to every pauper or be hanged."
That good, at least, the [illegible] gain from Nausicydes.

Chr. Then, after him, there bounded up to speak
A spruce and pale-faced youth, like Nicias.
And he declared we ought to place the State
[illegible] the hands of (whom do you think?) the women!
Then the whole mob of shoemakers began
To cheer [illegible] whilst all the country folk
Hooted and hissed.

Bl. They showed their sense, by Zeus.

Chr. But [illegible] less their numbers, so the lad went on,
Speaking all good of women, but of you
[illegible] evil [illegible] bad.

Bl. What?

Chr. First of all he called you
An arrant rogue.

Bl. And you?

Chr. Let be, [illegible] while.
Also [illegible] thief.

Bl. [illegible] only?

Chr. And by Zeus,
A sycophant.

Bl. Me only?

Chr. And by Zeus,
All our friends here.

Bl. Well, who says nay to that?

Chr. And then the woman is, he said, a thing
Stuffed full of wit and moneymaking ways.
They don't betray their Thesmophorian secrets,
But you and I blab all State secrets out.

Bl. By Hermes, there at least he told no lie.

Chr. And women lend each other, said the lad,
Their dresses, trinkets, money, drinking-cups,
Though quite alone, with never a witness there.
And all restore the loan, and none withhold it.
But men, he said, are always doing this.

Bl. Aye, [illegible] when though witnesses were there.

Chr. They don't inform, or prosecute, or put
The people down, but everything that's right,
And more, besides, he praised the women and.

Bl. What was determined?

Chr. To entrust the State
Into their hands. This was the one reform
Not yet attempted.

Bl. 'Twas decreed.

Chr. I say.

Bl So then the women now must undertake
All manly duties?
Chr So I understand
Bl Then I shan t be a dicast but my wife?
Chr Nor you support your household but your wife
Bl Nor I get grumbling up in early morn?
Chr No for the future that s your wife s affair
You ll lie abed no grumbling any more
Bl But hark ye twould be rough on us old men
If when the women hold the reins of State
They should perforce compel us to—
Chr Do what?
Bl Make love to them
Chr But if we re not prepared?
Bl They ll dock our breakfasts
Chr Therefore learn the way
How to make love and eat your breakfast too
Bl Upon compulsion! Faugh!
Chr If that is for
The public good we needs must all obey
There is a legend of the olden time
That all our foolish plans and vain conceits
Are overruled to work the public good
So be it now high Pallas and ye gods!
But I must go Farewell
Bl And farewell Chremes
Exeunt
Enter CHORUS
Chorus Step strong! March along!
But search and scan if any man
be somewhere following in our rear
Look out! Wheel about!
And O be sure that all s secure
for many are the rogues I fear
Lest someone coming up behind us
in this ungodly guise should find us
Be *sure* you make a clattering sound
with both your feet against the ground
For dismal shame and scandal great
Will everywhere upon us wait
if our disguise they penetrate
So wrap your garments round you tight
And peep about with all your might
Both here and there and on your right
Or this our plot to save the State
will in disaster terminate
Move on dear friends move on apace
for now we re very near the place
From whence we started when we went
to join the men in Parliament
And there s the mansion full in view
where dwells our lady chieftain who
The wise and noble scheme invented
to which the State has just assented
So *now* no longer must we stay
no longer while the time away
False bearded with this bristly hair
Lest someone see us and declare
our hidden secret everywhere
So draw ye closer at my call
Beneath the shadow of the wall
And glancing sideways one and all
Adjust and change your dresses there
and bear the form which erst ye bare
For *see* the noble lady fair
our chieftainess approaching there
She s coming home with eager speed
from yon Assembly take ye heed
And loathe upon your chins to wear
that monstrous equipage of hair
For neath its tickling mass I know
they ve all been smarting long ago

PRAXAGORA *is seen returning from the Assembly She is still wearing her husband's garments and enters the stage alone We hear no more of the* TWO WOMEN *who had been her companions there before And nobody else comes on the stage until* BLEPYRUS *and* CHREMES *emerge from their respective houses twenty lines below*

Pr So far dear sisters these our bold designs
Have all gone off successfully and well
But now at once or e er some wight perceive us,
Off with your woollens cast your shoes unloose
The jointed clasp of thy Laconian reins
Discard your staves Nay but do *you* my dear
Get these in order I myself will steal
Into the house and ere my husband see me
Put back his overcloak unnoticed where
I found it and whatever else I took

PRAXAGORA *retires into her house (the house of* BLEPYRUS) *to change her dress whilst the* CHORUS *change theirs in the orchestra She almost immediately returns and henceforth all the women are clothed in their proper habiliments*

Ch We have done your behest and as touching the rest
We will do whatsoever you tell us is best
For truly I ween that a woman so keen
Resourceful and subtle we never have seen

Pr Then all by my side as the councillors tried
Of the office I hold be content to abide
For *there* in the fuss and hullabaloo
Ye proved yourself women most manly and true

Enter BLEPYRUS *and* CHREMES *from their respective houses*

Bl Hallo Praxagora whence come *you*?
Pr What s that
To you my man?
Bl What s that to me? That s cool
Pr Not from a lover *that* you know
Bl Perchance
From more than one
Pr That you can test directly
Bl Marry and how?
Pr Smell if my hair is perfumed
Bl Does not a woman sin unless she s perfumed?
Pr *I* don t at all events
Bl What made you steal
Away so early with my overcloak?
Pr I was called out ere daybreak to a friend
In pangs of childbirth
Bl Why not tell me first
Before you went?

Pr Not haste to h lp her in
Sub straits, my husband?
Bl After tell ng me
Something s wrong there
Pr Nay by the Twain I went
Just as I was the wench who came besought me
T lose no time.
Bl Is that the reason why
You did not put your mantle on? You threw it
Over m bed and took my overcloak
And left me l n lik a corpse la d out
Onl l d ever a wreath or bottle of oil.
Pr The ni ht was cold and I m so sl ght and
frail
I took your overcloak to keep me warm
And you I left well snu gled up in warmth
And rugs, m husband.
Bl How came m staff to form
One of our party and my red Laconians?
Pr I took you shoes t sa e our o e cloak
Ap g our walk, stumping with both my feet
And striking do n your staff ga nst th to es.
Bl You e lost ei ht quarts of wheat I d ha e
you know
Which th Assembl would ha e brought me n
Pr Well, never mind she s got a bonny boy
Bl Wh ? th Assembly has?
Pr No, fool, the woman.
E t has t met?
Bl I told ou yesterday
T as going to meet
Pr O yes, I now remember
Bl Hav you not heard th n what s decreed?
Pr No, dear
Bl Then sit you down and hew your cuttlefish.
The State, they say is handed over to you!
Pr What for? To wea e?
Bl No, go ern.
Pr Go ern what?
Bl All the whole work and business of the State.
Pr Oher s a luck State, by Aphrod te,
Her gain to hav !
Bl How so?
Pr For many reasons.
For now o lon er shall bo d men be free
To ame the city no mor witnessin
No false informi g—
Bl Han t, don t do that.
Don t take a a my ool mean of li in !
Ch Pra ar be still and let he lad speak.
Pr N the s of overcloaks, n en views now
None to be poor and naked an more
N ra ings, no distraining on our goods.
Ch Now b Poseidon, wond ous ews if tru
Pr Aye and I ll pro so that o d support me,
And h himself ha no ght t sa a ainst t.
Ch Now waken our intellect bri ht,
Your soul philosophic, that knows
So well for our comrades to fi ht,
For all t our happiness goes
The project your n will disclose,
As th thousands of p s ou propose
The citizen life to endow
Now show us what things you can do!
It is t me for the populace now
Requ res an original new
Experiment only do you
Some no elty bring from your store
Never spoken or done heretofore
The aud ence don t like to be cheated
With hum urs too often repeated
So come to the point and at once for delay
Is a thing the pectators detest in a play
Pr I e an exc llent scheme if you will but
beli e e it
But I cannot be sure how our friends will recei e it
Or what they will do, if the old I eschew
And propound them a system erratic and new
This makes me a trifle alarmed and fa nt hearted
Bl As to that y ma safely be fearless and bold
We adore what is new and abhor wh t i old
This rule we etain when all lse ha d pa ted
Pr Then all to the speaker in silence attend
And d n t interrupt t ll I come to th end
And we gh a d pe pend till you quite comprehend
Th drift and ntent of the schem I p esent
The u which I dare to enact and declare
Is that all shall be equal, and equally ha e
All wealth and enj yments, nor lon r endure
That one should be ri h, a d another be poor
That one hould ha e acres, f r tretch ng and wide,
And another not even enou h to p o de
Himself w th gra e that thus at his call
Should ha e hundreds of servants, and that none
at all
All th s I nt nd to correct and mend
Now ll of all blessings shall freely partake
O lif and one stem for all men I make
Bl And how will you manag t?
Pr First I'll provide
That the sil er and la d, and what er beside
Each man shall possess, hall be common nd free,
O fund f r the public then out of t w
Will feed and maintain you, like housekeepers true,
Dispensi and paring and caring for you.
Bl W th rega d to the land, I can quite under
stand
B t how if a man ha e h s money in hand
Not farms, which you see, nd he cannot withhold,
B t talents of sil er nd Darics of gold?
Pr All this to th stores he must bring
Bl But suppose
H hoose to etain it and obody knows
Rank perj ry doubtless but what if it be?
'Twas by that he equired t at first
Pr I agree.
But now twill be useless he ll need it no more.
Bl How mean ou?
Pr All pressur from want will be o er
Now each will ha all that ma can desire
Cakes barley lo es, hestnut bu dant ttire,
Wine, garland and fish then wh should he wish
Th wea h he ha gotten b fraud to retain?
If you know y reason I hope you'll explain.

Bl Tis those that have most of these goods I believe
That are always the worst and the keenest to thieve
Pr I grant you my friend in the days that are past
In your old fashioned system abolished at last
But what he s to gain though his wealth he retain
When all things are common I d have you explain
Bl If a youth to a girl his devotion would show
He surely must woo her with presents
Pr O no
All women and men will be common and free
No marriage or other restraint there will be
Bl But if all should aspire to the favours of one
To the girl that is fairest what then will be done?
Pr By the side of the beauty so stately and grand
The dwarf the deformed and the ugly will stand
And before you re entitled the beauty to woo
Your court you must pay to the hag and the shrew
Bl For the ladies you ve nicely provided no doubt
No woman will now be a lover without
But what of the men? For the girls I suspect
The handsome will choose and the ugly reject
Pr No girl will of course be permitted to mate
Except in accord with the rules of the State
By the side of her lover so h ndsome and tall
Will be stationed the squat the ungainly and small
And before she s entitled the beau to obtain
Her love she must grant to the awkward and plain
Bl O then such a nose as Lysicrates shows
Will vie v ith the fairest and best I suppose
Pr O yes tis a nice democratic device
A popular system as ever was tried
A jape on the swells with their rings and their pride
Now fopling away Gaffer Hobnail will say
Stand aside it is I have precedence to-day
Bl But how may I ask will the children be known?
And how can a father distinguish his own?
Pr They will never be known it can never be told
All youths will in common be sons of the old
Bl If in vain to distinguish our children we seek
Pray what will become of the agèd and weak?
At present I own though a father be known
Sons throttle and choke him with hearty goodwill
But will they not do it more cheerily still
When the sonship is doubtful?
Pr No certainly not
For now if a boy should a parent annoy
The lads who are near will of course interfere
For they may themselves be his children I wot
Bl In much that you say there is much to admire
But what if Leucolophus claim me for sire
Or vile Epicurus? I think you ll agree
That a great and unbearable nuisance twould be
Chr A nuisance much greater than this might befall you
Bl How so?
Chr If the skunk Aristyllus should call you
His father and seize you a kiss to imprint
Bl O hang him! Confound him! O how I would pound him!
Chr I fancy you soon would be smelling of mint
Pr But this sir is nonsense it never could be.
That whelp was begotten before the Decree
His kiss it is plain you can never obtain
Bl The prospect I view with disgust and alarm
But who will attend to the work of the farm?
Pr All labour and toil to your slaves you will leave
Your business twill be when the shadows of eve
Ten feet on the face of the dial are cast
To scurry away to your evenin repast
Bl Our clothes what of them?
Pr You have plenty in store
When these are worn out we will weave you some more
Bl Just one other thing If an action they bring
What funds will be mine for discharging the fine?
You won t pay it out of the stores I opine
Pr A fine to be paid when an action they bring!
Why bless you our people won t know such a thing
As an action
Bl No actions! I feel a misgiving
Pray what are our people to do for a living?
Chr You are right there are many will rue it
Pr No doubt
But what can one then bring an action about?
Bl There are reasons in plenty I ll just mention one
If a debtor won t pay you pray what s to be done?
Pr If a debtor won t pay! Nay but tell me, my friend
How the creditor came by the money to lend?
All money I thought to the stores had been brought
I ve got a suspicion I say it with grief
Your creditor s surely a bit of a thief
Chr Now that is an answer acute and befitting
Bl But what if a man should be fined for com mitting
Some common assault when elated with wine
Pray what are his means for discharging that fine?
I have posed you I think
Pr Why his victuals and drink
Will be stopped by command for awhile and I guess
That he will not again in a hurry transgress,
When he pays with his stomach
Bl Will thieves be unknown?
Pr Why how should they steal what is partly their own?
Bl No chance then to meet at night in the street
Some highwayman coming our cloaks to abstract?
Pr No not if you re sleepin at home nor in fact
Though you choose to go out That trade why pursue it?
There s plenty for all but suppose him to do it
Don t fight and resist him what need of a pother?
You can go to the stores, and they ll give you another
Bl Shall we gambling forsake?

Pr Why what could you stake?
P But what is the st le of our living to be?
Pr One common to all, independent and free
All bars and partitions for ever undone
All pri at est blishments fused into one.
Bl Then where may I ask, will o r dinners be laid?
Pr Ea h court and arcade of the law shall be made
A banquetin hall for th citizens.
Bl Right.
B t hat will you do with the desk for the speakers?
Pr I'll make it a stand for the cups and the beakers
And the e shall the striplings be ranged to recite
Th deeds of th bra e and the jo s of the fight
And th coward, dis race till out of the place
Each coward hall slink with a very red face,
Not stopping to dine.
B O but that will be fine.
And what of th balloting booths?
Pr They shall go
To the head of the market place all n a row
And ther by Harmod us taking my stat on,
I'll tickets dispense to the whole of the nation,
Till each one has got his particular lot,
And manfully bustles along to the sign
Of the letter wh eat he empanelled t dine.
The man who has A shall be ushered away
To the Royal Arcade to the ext will go B
And C to the Cornmarket
Bl Merely t see?
Pr No, fool, but to dine
Bl 'Tis an exc llent plan.
Then he who ets never a letter poor man,
Gets never dinner
Pr But twill not be so.
There'll be plenty for all, and to pare
N stint and no grudging our system will know
B t each wil way fr m th revelry go,
Elated and grand with a tor h in his hand
And a garland of flowers in his hair
And then through the st eets as they wander a lot
Of women will und them be creepin
"O come t my lodgi " says on I ha e got
Such a bea t ful girl in my keeping
But here is th sweetest nd fairest my boy"
F om a indow another will so
But ere ou e t tled her lov to enjoy
Your toll to myself ou must pay
Th a sorry companion, flat aged and old
Wil thout to th you gster A ast!
And here are yo going so gallant nd bold
And where a e yo hi t so fast?
Tis in vai you must y ld to the laws f the State
And I hall be courti g th fai
Whilst you m st without n the est but wait
And stri e to muse ourself th e dear boy
And tri e to amuse ourself th e
There ow wh t think ye f my scheme?
Bl F rst rate.
Pr Then now I ll go to the mark t place, and there,
Takin some clear voiced girl as crieress,
Recei e the goods as people bring them in.
This must I do, elected ch eftainess
To rule the State and start t e public feasts
That so your banquet may commence to-day
Bl What shall we banquet now at once?
Pr You shall.
And next I'll make a thorough sweep of all
The flauntin harlots.
Bl Why?
Pr That these free ladies
May ha e the firstlin manhood of our youths.
Those servil hussies shall no lon er poach
Upon the true love manors of the free.
No, let them h rd w th sla es, and lie with sla es.
In servile fashion snipped and trimmed to match.
Bl Lead on my lass, I ll follow close behind
That men may point and whisper as I pass,
There goes the husband of o r chief aines
Chr And I will muster and rev ew my goods,
And bring them all, as ordered to the tores.

Exeunt PR XAGORA, BLEPYRUS, *and* CHREMES

(Here was a choral song now lost During which CHREMES *s preparing to bri out h s chattels from the house)*

Ch My sweet bran winnower come you sweetly here.
March out the first of all my household goods,
Powdered and trim, like some youn basket bearer
Aye, many a sa k of mine you have bolted down.
Now where s the hair girl? Come along dear pot
(Wow! but you re black scarce blacker had you chanced
To boil the dye Lysicrates employ)
And stand by *her* Come hither tiring maid
And pitcher bearer bear your pitcher here.
You fair musician, take your station there,
You whose untimely trumpet-call has oft
Roused me ere daybreak, to attend the Assembly
Who s got the dish, go forward take the combs
Of honey set the ol ve branches ni h
Bring out the tripod and the bottles of oil
Th pannikins and rubb h you can leave

Now another door opens the door on which PRAXAGO *had set lately attached, 34 above and the* HUS D OF THE COND WOM N *a an comes out s he did 3-7 above*

Ci I bring m goods to the tores! That were to be
A hapless eree horn ill endowed with brains.
I'll ne er do it by Poseidon, never!
I'll test the th ng and scan its bearings first
I m not the man to fling my sweat and thrift
So silly nd so brainless! way
Be o e I e fathomed how the matter stands.
—You th re! what means this lon array of chattels?
Are they brou ht out because you re hangin house
Or are you going to pawn th m?
Chr No.
Ci Then why
All in a row? Ar they n grand procession,
Marchin t Hiero the uctioneer?

Bl Tis those that have most of these goods I believe
That are always the worst and the keenest to thieve
Pr I grant you my friend in the days that are past
In your old fashioned system abolished at last
But what he s to gain though his wealth he retain
When all things are common I d have you explain
Bl If a youth to a girl his devotion would show
He surely must woo her with presents
Pr O no
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No marriage or other restraint there will be
Bl But if all should aspire to the favours of one
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Pr By the side of the beauty so stately and grand
The dwarf the deformed and the ugly will stand
And before you re entitled the beauty to woo
Your court you must pay to the hag and the shrew
Bl For the ladies you ve nicely provided no doubt
No woman will now be a lover without
But what of the men? For the girls I suspect
The handsome will choose and the ugly reject
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By the side of her lover so handsome and tall
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Will vie with the fairest and best I suppose
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A jape on the swells with their rings and their pride
Now fopling away Gaffer Hobnail will say
Stand aside it is I have precedence to-day
Bl But how may I ask will the children be known?
And how can a father distinguish his own?
Pr They will never be known it can never be told
All youths will in common be sons of the old
Bl If in vain to distinguish our children we seek
Pray what will become of the agèd and weak?
At present I own though a father be known
Sons throttle and choke him with hearty goodwill
But will they not do it more cheerily still
When the sonship is doubtful?
Pr No certainly not
For now if a boy should a parent annoy
The lads who are near will of course interfere
For they may themselves be his children I wot
Bl In much that you say there is much to admire
But what if Leucolophus claim me for sire
Or vile Epicurus? I think you ll agree
That a great and unbearable nuisance twould be
Chr A nuisance much greater than this might befall you
Bl How so?
Chr If the skunk Aristyllus should call you
His father and seize you a kiss to imprint
Bl O hang him! Confound him! O how I would pound him!
Chr I fancy you soon would be smelling of mint
Pr But this sir is nonsense it never could be
That whelp was begotten before the Decree
His kiss it is plain you can never obtain
Bl The prospect I view with disgust and alarm
But who will attend to the work of the farm?
Pr All labour and toil to your slaves you will leave
Your business twill be when the shadows of eve
Ten feet on the face of the dial are cast
To scurry away to your evening repast
Bl Our clothes what of them?
Pr You have plenty in store
When these are worn out we will weave you some more
Bl Just one other thing If an action they bring
What funds will be mine for discharging the fine?
You won t pay it out of the stores I opine
Pr A fine to be paid when an action they bring!
Why bless you our people won t know such a thing
As an action
Bl No actions! I feel a misgiving
Pray what are our people to do for a living?
Chr You are right there are many will rue it
Pr No doubt
But what can one then bring an action about?
Bl There are reasons in plenty I ll just mention one
If a debtor won t pay you pray what s to be done?
Pr If a debtor won t pay! Nay but tell me my friend
How the creditor came by the money to lend?
All money I thought to the stores had been brought
I ve got a suspicion I say it with grief
Your creditor s surely a bit of a thief
Chr Now that is an answer acute and befitting
Bl But what if a man should be fined for committing
Some common assault when elated with wine
Pray what are his means for discharging that fine?
I have posed you I think
Pr Why his victuals and drink
Will be stopped by command for awhile and I guess
That he will not again in a hurry transgress,
When he pays with his stomach
Bl Will thieves be unknown?
Pr Why how should they steal what is partly their own?
Bl No chance then to meet at night in the street
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There's plenty for all but suppose him to do it
Don t fight and resist him what need of a pother?
You can go to the stores and they ll give you another
Bl Shall we gambling forsake?

Pr Why what could you stake?
B. But what is the style of our living to be?
Pr One common to all, independent and free,
All bars and partitions for ever undone,
All private establishments fused into one.
B. Then where may I ask, will our dinners be laid?
Pr Each court and arcade of the law shall be made
A banqueting hall for the citizens.
B. Right.
But what will you do with the desk for the speakers?
Pr I'll make it a stand for the cups and the beakers
And there shall the striplings be ranged to recite
The deeds of the brave, and the joys of the fight,
And the coward's disgrace till out of the place
Each coward shall slink with a very red face
Not stopping to dine.
B. O but that will be fine.
And what of the balloting booths?
Pr They shall go
To the head of the market place, all in a row
And there by Harmodius taking my station,
I'll tickets dispense to the *whole of the nation*,
Till each one has got his particular lot,
And manfully bustles along to the sign
Of the letter whereat he's empanelled to dine.
The man who has A shall be ushered away
To the Royal Arcade to the next will *go* B
And C to the Cornmarket
B. Merely *to see?*
Pr No, fool, but to dine.
B. 'Tis an excellent plan.
Then he who gets never a letter poor man,
Gets never a dinner
Pr But 'twill not be so.
There'll be plenty for all, and to spare.
No stint and no grudging our system will know
But each will away from the revelry go,
Elated and grand, with a torch in his hand
And a garland of flowers in his hat
And then through the streets as they wander a lot
Of women will round them be creeping
"O come to my lodging says one, I have got
Such a beautiful girl in my keeping
But here is the sweetest and fairest, my boy"
From a window another will say
But ere you're entitled her love to enjoy
Your toll to myself you must pay"
Then a sorry companion, flat nosed and old,
Will shout to the youngster "Avast!
And where are you going, so gallant and bold
And where are you hieing so fast?
'Tis in vain you must yield to the laws of the State,
And I shall be courting the fair
Whilst you must without in the vestibule wait,
And try to amuse yourself there dear boy
And try to amuse yourself there.
There now what think you of my scheme?
Bl. First rate
Pr Then now I'll go to the market place, and there,
Taking some clear voiced girl as crieress,
Receive the goods as people bring them in.
This must I do, elected chieftainess
To rule the State and start the public feasts
That so your banquets may commence to-day
Bl What, shall we banquet now at once?
Pr You shall.
And next I'll make a thorough sweep of all
The flaunting harlots.
Bl. Why?
Pr That these free ladies
May have the firstling manhood of our youths.
Those servile hussies shall no longer poach
Upon the true love manors of the free.
No, let them herd with slaves, and lie with slaves,
In servile fashion snipped and trimmed to match.
Bl. Lead on my lass. I'll follow close behind
That men may point and whisper as I pass,
There goes the husband of our chieftainess
Chr And I will muster and review my goods,
And bring them all, as ordered to the stores.

Exeunt PRAXAGORA, BLEPYRUS, *and* CHREMES

(*Here was a choral song now lost during which* CHREMES *is preparing to bring out his chattels from the house*)

Chr My sweet bran winnower come you sweetly here.
March out the first of all my household goods,
Powdered and trim, like some young basket bearer
Aye, many a sack of mine you have bolted down.
Now where's the chair girl? Come along dear pot,
(Wow! but you're black scarce blacker had you chanced
To boil the dye Lysistrates employs)
And stand by *her* Come hither tiring maid
And pitcher bearer bear your pitcher here
You, fair musician, take your station there
You whose untimely trumpet-call has oft
Roused me ere day break, to attend the Assembly
Who's got the dish, go forward take the combs
Of honey set the olive branches nigh
Bring out the tripods and the bottles of oil
The pannikins and rubbish you can leave

Now another door opens the door upon which PRAXAGORA *had so lately scratched, 34 above and the* HUSBAND *OF THE* SECOND WOMAN *again comes out as he did 327 above*

Ci. I bring my goods to the stores! That were to be
A hapless greenhorn, ill endowed with brains.
I'll never do it by Poseidon, never!
I'll test the thing and scan its bearings first
I'm not the man to fling my sweat and thrift
So idly and so brainlessly away
Before I've fathomed how the matter stands.
—You there! what means this long array of chattels?
Are they brought out because you're changing house
Or are you going to pawn them?
Chr No.
Ci Then why
All in a row? Are they in grand procession,
Marching to Hiero the auctioneer?

Chr O no I am going to bring them to the stores
For the State s use so run the new made laws
Ci (*in shrill surprise*) You are going to bring them!
Chr Yes
Ci By Zeus the Saviour
You re an ill starred one!
Chr How?
Ci How? Plain enough
Chr What must I not forsooth obey the laws?
Ci The laws poor wretch! What laws?
Chr The new made laws
Ci The new made laws? O what a fool you are!
Chr A fool?
Ci Well aren t you? Just the veriest dolt
In all the town!
Chr Because I do what s ordered?
Ci Is it a wise man s part to do what s ordered?
Chr Of course it is
Ci Of course it is a fool s
Chr Then won t you bring yours in?
Ci I ll wait awhile
And watch the people what they re going to do
Chr What *should* they do but bring their chattels in
For the State s use?
Ci *I saw it and believed*
Chr Why in the streets they talk—
Ci Ay talk they will
Chr Saying they ll bring their goods—
Ci Ay say they will
Chr Zounds! you doubt everything
Ci Ay doubt they will
Chr O Heaven confound you
Ci Ay confound they will
What! think you men of sense will bring their goods?
Not they! That s not our custom we re disposed
Rather to take than give like the dear gods
Look at their statues stretching out their hands!
We pray the powers to give us all things good
Still they hold forth their hands with hollowed palms
Showing their notion is to take not give
Chr Pray now good fellow let me do my work
Hi! where s the strap? These must be tied together
Ci You are really going?
Chr Don t you see I m tying
These tripods up this instant?
Ci O what folly!
Not to delay a little and observe
What other people do and then—
Chr And then?
Ci Why then put off and then delay again
Chr Why so?
Ci Why if perchance an earthquake came
Or lightning fell or a cat cross the street
They ll soon cease bringing in you blockhead you!
Chr A pleasant jest if I should find no room
To bring my chattels!
Ci To *receive* you mean
'Twere time to bring them two days hence.
Chr How mean you?
Ci I know these fellows voting in hot haste
And straight ignoring the decree they ve passed
Chr They ll bring them friend
Ci But if they don t what then?
Chr No fear they ll bring them
Ci If they don t what then?
Chr We ll fight them
Ci If they prove too strong what then?
Chr I ll leave them
Ci If they won t be left what then?
Chr Go hang yourself
Ci And if I do what then?
Chr 'Twere a good deed
Ci You are really going to bring them?
Chr Yes that s exactly what I m going to do
I see my neighbours bringing theirs
Ci O ay
Antisthenes for instance Heavens he d liefer
Sit on the stool for thirty days and more
Chr Be hanged!
Ci Well but Callimachus the poet
What will *he* bring them?
Chr More than Callias can
Ci Well here s a man will throw away his substance
Chr That s a hard saying
Ci Hard? when every day
We see abortive resolutions passed!
That vote about the salt you mind *that* don t you?
Chr I do
Ci And how we voted don t you mind
Those copper coins
Chr And a bad job for me
That coinage proved I sold my grapes and stuffed
My cheek with coppers then I steered away
And went to purchase barley in the market
When just as I was holding out my sack
The herald cried No copper coins allowed!
Nothing but silver must be paid or taken!
Ci Then that late tax the two-and a half per cent
Euripides devised weren t we all vowing
Twould yield five hundred talents to the State?
Then every man would gild Euripides
But when we reckoned up and found the thing
A Zeus s Corinth and no good at all
Then every man would tar Euripides
Chr But times have altered then the men bare sway
'Tis now the women
Ci Who, I ll take good care
Shan t try on *me* their little piddling ways
Chr You re talking nonsense Boy take up the yoke

Enter a CRIER *to summon all citizens to the banquet*

Crier O all ye citizens (for now tis thus)
Come all come quick straight to your chieftainess.
There cast your lots there fortune shall assign
To every man his destined feasting place
Come for the tables now are all prepared
And laden heavily with all good things
The couches all with rugs and cushions piled!
They re mixing wine the perfume selling girls

Hag I? I m singing
With bated breath to dear Epigenes
Gi I thought old Geres was your only dear
Hag You ll soon think otherwise he ll come to *me*
O here he is himself

Enter YOUTH *bearing a torch*

Gi Not wanting aught
Of you Old Plague
Hag O yes Miss Pineaway
Gi His acts will show I ll slip away unseen

Exit

Hag And so will I You ll find I m right my beauty
Youth O that I now might my darling woo!
Nor first be doomed to the foul embrace
Of an ancient hag with a loathsome face
To a free born stripling a dire disgrace!
Hag That you never my boy can do!
Tis not Charixena s style to-day
Now the laws you must needs obey
Under our democratical sway
I ll run and watch what next you are going to do
Yo O might I catch dear gods, my fair alone
To whom I hasten flushed with love and wine.
Gi (*re appearing above*) That vile old Hag I nicely cozened her
She deems I m safe within and off she s gone
But here s the very lad of whom we spake
(*Singing*) This way this way
Hither my soul s delight!
O come to my arms my love my own
O come to my arms this night
Dearly I long for my love
My bosom is shaken and whirls
My heart is afire with a wild desire
For my boy with the sunbright curls
Ah me what means this strange unrest
This love which lacerates my breast?
O God of Love I cry to thee
Be pitiful be merciful
And send my love to me
Yo (*singing*) Hither O hither my love
This way this way
Run run down from above,
Open the wicket I pray
Else I shall swoon I shall die!
Dearly I long for thy charms
Longing and craving and yearning to lie
In the bliss of thy snow soft arms
O Cypris, why my bosom stir
Making me rage and rave for her?
O God of Love I cry to thee
Be pitiful be merciful
And send my love to me
Enough I trow is said to show
the straits I m in my lonely grieving
Too long I ve made my serenade
descend sweetheart thy chamber leaving
Open true welcome show
Sore pangs for thee I undergo
O Love bedight with golden light
presentment fair of soft embraces,
The Muses bee, of Love s sweet tree
the flower the nursling of the Graces,
Open true welcome show
Sore pangs for thee I undergo.

Exit GIRL

Hag (*re appearing*) Hi! knocking? seeking me?
Yo A likely joke
Hag You banged against my door
Yo Hanged if I did
Hag Then why that lighted torch? What seek you here?
Yo Some Anaphlystian burgher
Hag What s his name?
Yo No not Sebinus whom *you* want belike.
Hag By Aphrodite will you nill you sir

The HAG *tries to drag him into her house*

Yo Ah but we re not now taking cases over
Sixty years old they ve been adjourned till later
We re taking now those under twenty years
Hag Aha but that was under darling boy
The old regime now you must take us first
Yo Aye if I will so runs the Paetian law
Hag You didn t did you dine by Paetian law
Yo Don t understand you there s the girl I want.
Hag Aye but *me* first you must you rogue you must
Yo O we don t want a musty pack cloth now
Hag I know I m loved but O you wonder don t you,
To see me out of doors come buss me do
Yo No no I dread your lover
Hag Whom do you mean?
Yo That prince of painters
Hag Who is he I wonder
Yo Who paints from life the bottles for the dead
Away! begone! he ll see you at the door
Hag I know I know your wishes
Yo And I yours.
Hag I vow by Aphrodite whose I am
I ll never let you go
Yo You re mad old lady
Hag Nonsense! I ll drag you recreant to my couch
Yo Why buy we hooks to raise our buckets then
When an old hag like this let deftly down
Could claw up all the buckets from our wells?
Hag No scoffing honey come along with me
Yo You ve got no rights, unless you ve paid the tax
One fifth per cent on all your wealth—of years.
Hag O yes you must O yes by Aphrodite,
Because I love to cuddle lads like you
Yo But I don t love to cuddle hags like you
Nor will I never! never!
Hag O yes, you will
This will compel you
Yo What in the world is *this*?
Hag *This* is a law which bids you follow me
Yo Read what it says.
Hag O yes my dear I will
Be it enacted please to listen you
By us the ladies if a youth would woo

THE PLUTUS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CARIO, *servant of Chremylus*
CHREMYLUS
PLUTUS, *God of Wealth*
BLEPSIDEMUS
POVERTY
WIFE OF CHREMYLUS
A GOOD MAN
AN INFORMER
AN OLD LADY
A YOUTH
HERMES
A PRIEST OF ZEUS
CHORUS OF NEEDY AGRICULTURISTS

Scene: a street in Athens with the house of CHREMYLUS *in the background. Groping along in front is a* BLIND MAN *of squalid appearance followed by* CHREMYLUS, *an elderly citizen, and a slave* CARIO, *wearing wreaths of bay*

CARIO. How hard it is, O Zeus and all ye Gods,
To be the slave of a demented master!
For though the servant give the best advice,
Yet if his owner otherwise decide,
The servant needs must share the ill results.
For a man's body, such is fate, belongs
Not to himself, but to whoever has bought it.
So much for that. But now with Loxias,
Who from his golden tripod chants his high
Oracular strains, I've got a bone to pick.
A wise Physician seer they call him, yet
He has sent my master off so moody mad,
That now he's following a poor blind old man,
Just the reverse of what he ought to do.
For we who see should go *before* the blind,
But he goes *after* (and constrains me too)
One who won't answer even with a grunt.
I won't keep silence, master, no I won't,
Unless you tell me why you're following *here*.
I'll pester you, Sir. I know you won't chastise me
So long as I've this sacred chaplet on.

CHREMYLUS. I'll pluck it off that you may smart the more
If you keep bothering.

CA. Humbug! I won't stop
Until you have told me who this fellow is.
You know I ask it out of love for you.

CHR. I'll tell you, for of all my servants you
I count the truest and most constant—thief.
—I've been a virtuous and religious man
Yet always poor and luckless.

CA. So you have.

CHR. While Temple-breakers, orators, informers,
And knaves grow rich and prosper.

CA. So they do.

CHR. So then I went to question of the God—
Not for myself, the quiver of my life
Is well-nigh emptied of its arrows now—
But for my son, my only son, to ask
If, changing all his habits, he should turn
A rogue, dishonest, rotten to the core
For such as they, methinks, succeed the best.

CA. And what droned Phoebus from his wreaths of bay?

CHR. He told me plainly that with whomsoever
I first forgathered as I left the shrine
Of him I never should leave go again,
But win him back in friendship, to my home.

CA. With whom then did you first forgather?

CHR. Him.

CA. And can't you see the meaning of the God
You ignoramus, who so plainly tells you
Your son should follow the prevailing fashion?

CHR. Why think you that?

CA. He means that even the blind
Can see it's better for our present life
To be a rascal, rotten to the core.

CHR. 'Tis not that way the oracle inclines,
It cannot be. 'Tis something more than that.
Now if this fellow told us who he is,
And why and wherefore he has come here now
We'd soon discover what the God intended.

CA. (*to* WEALTH) Hallo, you sirrah, tell me who you are,
Or take the consequence! Out with it quick!

WEALTH. Go and be hanged!

CA. O master, did you hear
The name he gave?

CHR. 'Twas meant for you, not me.
You ask in such a rude and vulgar way.
(*To* WEALTH) Friend, if you love an honest gentleman,
Tell *me* your name.

W. Get out, you vagabond!

CA. O! O! Accept the omen, and the man.

CHR. O by Demeter you shall smart for this.
Answer this instant or you die the death.

W. Men, men, depart and leave me.

CHR. Wouldn't you like it?

CA. O master, what I say is far the best
I'll make him die a miserable death.
I'll set him on some precipice, and leave him,
So then he'll topple down and break his neck.

CHR. Up with him!

Bury my body by the harbour's mouth
And take the upper hag who still survives,
And tar her well and round her ankles twain
Pour molten lead and plant her on my grave,
The staring likeness of a bottle of oil *Exeunt*

Enter Praxagora's MAID

Maid O lucky People and O happy me
And O my mistress luckiest of us all
And ye who now are standing at our door
And all our neighbours aye and all our town
And I'm a lucky waiting maid who now
Have had my head with unguents rich and rare
Perfumed and bathed but far surpassing all
Are those sweet flagons full of Thasian wine.
Their fragrance long keeps lingering in the head
Whilst all the rest evaporate and fade
There's nothing half so good great gods, not half!
Choose the most fragrant mix it neat and raw
Twill make us merry all the whole night through
But tell me ladies where my master is
I mean the husband of my honoured mistress

Ch If you stay here, methinks you'll find him soon

Ma Aye here he comes (*Enter* BLEPYRUS *and the children*) He's off to join the dinner
O master O you lucky lucky man!

Bl What I?

Ma Yes you by Zeus you luckiest man
What greater bliss than yours, who out of more
Than thrice ten thousand citizens alone
Have managed you alone *to get no dinner?*

Ch You tell of a happy man and no mistake

Ma Hi! Hi! where now?

Bl I'm off to join the dinner

Ma And much the last of all by Aphrodite
Well well my mistress bade me take you sir
You and *these little girls and bring you thither*
Aye and there's store of Chian wine remaining
And other dainties too so don't delay
And all the audience who are well disposed
And every judge who looks not otherwards
Come on with us we'll freely give you all

Bl Nay no exceptions open wide your mouth
Invite them all in free and generous style
Boy stripling grandsire yea announce that all
Shall find a table all prepared and spread
For their enjoyment in—their own sweet homes
But I! I'll hurry off to join the feast
And here at least I've got a torch all handy

Ch Then why so long keep lingering here nor take
These little ladies down? And as you go,
I'll sing a song a Lay of Lay the-dinner
But first a slight suggestion to the judges.
Let the wise and philosophic
choose me for my wisdom's sake,
Those who joy in mirth and laughter
choose me for the jests I make
Then with hardly an exception
every vote I'm bound to win.
Let it nothing tell against me
that my play must first begin
See that through the afterpieces,
back to me your memory strays
Keep your oaths and well and truly
judge between the rival plays.
Be not like the wanton women
never mindful of the past
Always for the new admirer
always fondest of the last
Now tis time tis time tis time
Sisters dear tis time for certain
if we mean the thing to do,
To the public feast to hasten
Therefore foot it neatly you
First throw up your right leg so,
Then the left and away to go,
Cretan measure.

Bl Aye, with pleasure

Ch Now must the spindleshanks lanky and lean
Trip to the banquet for soon will I ween
High on the table be smoking a dish
Brimming with game and with fowl and with fish
All sorts of good things.
Plattero-filleto mulleto turboto
Cranio morselo-pickleo-acido-
Silphio honeyo pouredonthe topothe
Ouzelo throstleo cushato-culvero-
Cutleto roastingo-marrowo-dippero
Leveret syrupo gibleto-wings.
So now ye have heard these tidings true
Lay hold of a plate and an omelette too
And scurry away at your topmost speed
And so you will have whereon to feed

Bl They're guzzling already I know I know

Ch Then up with your feet and away to go
Off off to the supper we'll run
With a whoop for the prize hurrah hurrah
With a whoop for the prize hurrah hurrah
Whoop whoop for the victory won!

THE PLUTUS

DRAMATIS PERSON Æ

CARIO, *servant of Chremyl s*	A GOOD MAN
CHREMYLUS	AN I FORMER
PLUTUS, *God of Wealth*	AN OLD LADY
BLEPSI EMUS	A YOUTH
POVERTY	HE MES
WI E OF CHREMYLUS	A I IEST OF ZEUS

C ORU OF NEEDY AG ICULTUR S

Scene a street in Athens u h the ho se f CHREMYLUS *in the backgro nd Grop g alo g in front is a* BLIND M N *f sordid a pe a ce f ow d by* CHREMYLUS *an elderly ci zen, a d slave* CARIO, *w ari g wreaths of b y*

Cario H w hard t is, O Zeus and all ye Gods,
T be the sla of a demented master!
For though the servant gi e the best ad ice,
Yet if his owner otherwise decide
The servant needs m t shar the ill results.
For man s body such is fate, belongs
ot to himself, but to whoe er has bough t it.
So much for that. B t now with Loxias,
Who from his golden tr pod hants hi h gh
Oracula strains, I ve got bo e to pick.
A ise Ph sician-seer th y call him, yet
He has sent my master off so moody mad
That now he s following a poo blind old man,
Just the reverse f what he ought to do.
For e ho see should g *before* the blind
B t he goes *fter* (and constrains me too)
O e ho on t ans er even with a gr r
I on t keep silence, master no I wo t
Unless you tell me why yo e foll g *him*
I'll plague you, Sir I know y u wo t cha t se me
So lon as I this sacred chaplet on.
Chremylus I ll pl ck t ff that y u may mart the nore,
If ou keep bothering
Ca. Humbug! I won t t p
Until you ha e told me who the fellow is.
You know I ask t t of lo for you.
Ch I'll tell you, for f all my servant y u
I cou t the truest and most co ta t—thi f.
—I e been a irtuous and rel gous man
Yet al ays poor and luckless.
C So yo ha e.
Chr While Temple breakers, orators, inf r ners,
And knaves gr w rich and prosper
Ca So th y d
Chr So then I went to questio f the God—
Not for myself, the qui er f my lif
Is ll nigh emptied of ts ar ws w—
But for my son, my only son, to ask
If chang ng ll his habits, he should turn
A rogue d shonest *rotten to t e core*
For uch as they meth ls, succeed the best.
Ca And what droned Phoebus f om his wreaths of bay?
Chr He told me plainly that with whomsoe er
I first forg th red as I l ft the shrin
Of him I ne r should lea e go again
But w n h m back in fri nd hip to my home.
Ca With whom then did you first f rgather?
Chr Him.
Ca A d can t you see the meaning of the God,
You ignoramus, who so pla nly t lls you
Your son should follow the p e ailing fashion?
Ch Why th nk you that?
Ca He means that e en the blind
Can see tis better for our present life
To be rascal, rotten to the core.
Ch T s not that way th or cle t el nes,
It cannot be T s somethi g more than that.
Now f this fell w t ld u who he is,
And why nd wh efor he has come h re now
We d soon disco er what the God intended
Ca (*to* WEALTH) Hallo, you si r h tell me who you are.
O take the consequence! Out with it qu k!
W lth Go and be h ng d!
Ca O master d d you hear
Th n me he g e?
Ch Twas menat f r you not me.
Y ask s h a r d a d ulgar w y
(*T* E LTH) F end f you lo e n honest gentleman
T ll *m* your name
W Get out you a abond!
Ca O! O! A cept the omen and the man
Ch O by Dem ter yo hall smart for this.
An wer this insta t or you d the death
We Men men depart and leave me
Chr Wo ldn t you like it?
Ca O master what I say is far the best
I ll make him d miser bl death.
I ll t him some p ecipice, and leave him
So th he ll t pple d wn and break his neck.
Chr Up with him!

Bury my body by the harbour's mouth
And take the upper hag who still survives,
And tar her well and round her ankles twain
Pour molten lead and plant her on my grave
The staring likeness of a bottle of oil *Exeunt*

Enter Praxagora's MAID

Maid O lucky People and O happy me
And O my mistress luckiest of us all
And ye who now are standing at our door
And all our neighbours aye and all our town
And I'm a lucky waiting maid who now
Have had my head with unguents rich and rare
Perfumed and bathed but far surpassing all
Are those sweet flagons full of Thasian wine
Their fragrance long keeps lingering in the head
Whilst all the rest evaporate and fade
There's nothing half so good great gods, not half!
Choose the most fragrant mix it neat and raw
Twill make us merry all the whole night through
But tell me ladies where my master is
I mean the husband of my honoured mistress

Ch If you stay here methinks you'll find him soon

Ma Aye here he comes (*Enter* BLEPYRUS *and the children*) He's off to join the dinner
O master O you lucky lucky man!

Bl What I?

Ma Yes you by Zeus you luckiest man
What greater bliss than yours who out of more
Than thrice ten thousand citizens alone,
Have managed you alone to get no dinner?

Ch You tell of a happy man and no mistake

Ma Hi! Hi! where now?

Bl I'm off to join the dinner

Ma And much the last of all by Aphrodite
Well well my mistress bade me take you sir
You and these little girls and bring you thither
Aye and there's store of Chian wine remaining
And other dainties too so don't delay
And all the audience who are well disposed
And every judge who looks not otherwards
Come on with us we'll freely give you all

Bl Nay no exceptions open wide your mouth
Invite them all in free and generous style
Boy stripling grandsire yea announce that all
Shall find a table all prepared and spread
For their enjoyment in—their own sweet homes
But I! I'll hurry off to join the feast
And here at least I've got a torch all handy

Ch Then why so long keep lingering here nor take
These little ladies down? And as you go,
I'll sing a song a Lay of Lay the-dinner
But first a slight suggestion to the judges.
Let the wise and philosophic
choose me for my wisdom's sake
Those who joy in mirth and laughter
choose me for the jests I make
Then with hardly an exception
every vote I'm bound to win.
Let it nothing tell against me
that my play must first begin
See that through the afterpieces
back to me your memory strays
Keep your oaths, and well and truly
judge between the rival plays.
Be not like the wanton women
never mindful of the past
Always for the new admirer
always fondest of the last
Now tis time tis time tis time
Sisters dear tis time for certain
if we mean the thing to do,
To the public feast to hasten
Therefore foot it neatly you
First throw up your right leg so,
Then the left and away to go
Cretan measure

Bl Aye with pleasure

Ch Now must the spindleshanks lanky and lean
Trip to the banquet for soon will I ween
High on the table be smoking a dish
Brimming with game and with fowl and with fish
All sorts of good things
Plattero filleto-mulleto turboto-
Cranio morselo pickleo-acido-
Silphio honeyo pouredonthe topothe
Ouzelo throstleo cushato-culvero-
Cutleto roastingo-marrowo dippero-
Leveret syrupo gibleto-wings.
So now ye have heard these tidings true
Lay hold of a plate and an omelette too
And scurry away at your topmost speed
And so you will have whereon to feed

Bl They're guzzling already I know I know

Ch Then up with your feet and away to go
Off off to the supper we'll run
With a whoop for the prize hurrah hurrah
With a whoop for the prize hurrah hurrah
Whoop whoop for the victory won!

One is a tanner one an onion seller
Through thee the nabbed adulterer gets off
plucked.
H O and all this I never knew before!
Chr A e, tis on him the G eat King plumes
himself
And our Assemblies all are held f r him
Dost thou not man ur triremes? Answer that
Does he not feed the foreign troop at Corinth?
Won t Pamphilus be brought to grief for him?
Ca Won t P mphilus and the needle seller too?
Does not Agyrrhius flout us all fo him?
Chr Does not Philepsius tell his tales for thee?
Dost thou not make the Egyptians ur allies?
And La lo th ncouth Phil nides?
Ca. Timotheus to er—
Chr Pray Hea en t fall and crush you!
A e, everything that s don i d ne for thee.
Thou art lone, th self alone the source
Of all our fortu es, good and bad like.
T so n ar here er *he* alights,
That side is safe the ict ry to w n.
H Can I naided d su h feats as these?
Chr O es, b Zeus, and many m than these.
So that none e er has enough of thee.
Of all things else man may ha too much,
Of lo e,
Ca. Of loa es,
Chr Of literature
Ca. Of sweets,
Chr Of honour
Ca. Cheesecakes,
Chr Manliness,
Ca. Dried figs,
Chr Ambition,
Ca. Barl y meal,
Chr Command
Ca Pea soup
Chr B t no man er has enough of thee
For gi a man a sum f thirteen talents,
And all the more he h n for si teen
G him si t en and h must eds ha e forty
Or life n t worth his li ing so he says.
H Ye seem t me t peak extremely well,
Yet on one point I m fearful.
Chr What is that?
H This mighty power which ye ascr be to me,
I can t magine how I m going to w eld t
Chr O this t is that all th people say
Wealth is the cowardliest thing
H It is t tru
That is som burglar lander breaki g nto
A ealthy house, he f nd that erything
Was under lock and ke and so g t thing
Wher fore he called my forethou ht w rdli ess.
Chr Well, e er mind ssist us th work
And play th ma and rs soon I ll make you
Of kee r ght than er Lynceus was.
H Why h w can you, mortal man do that?
Chr Good hope ha e I fr m that which Phoebus
told me
Shaking th Pythian laurel as he poke.
We Is Phoebus privy to your plan?
Chr He is.
We Take heed!
Chr Don t fret yourself my worthy friend
I m the man I ll work the matter through
Though I should d e for it
Ca And so w ll I
Chr And many other bold allies w ll c me
Good irtuous men w th ut a gra n of—barley
We Bless m I a set of rath r poor allies.
Chr N t when you e made them wealthy men
once more
H Cario, run your fastest and
Ca Do what?
Chr Summon my farm companions from the
fields
(You ll find them tl ere poor fellows, hard at
work)
And f tch them hither so that each and all
May ha e with me an equal share in Wealth
Ca Here goes! I m ff Come out there somebody
And carry n my little piece of meat *Exit* c rio.
Chr I ll see to that you, run away d rectly
But thou dear Wealth the m ght est I wer of all
Com und i ath my roof Here st nds the house
Which thou rt goin e ermore to fill
With wealth nd plenty by fair means or foul.
We And y t it i ks me I protest t does,
To enter n be eath a tr ger s roof
I ne got the sli I test good from that
Was it a miser s ho se the miser tr ght
Would d g bole and pop me underground
And if some w thy neighbour came to beg
A little sil er for his u g t needs,
Would ow he d n er seen me in his life.
Or was t some ou g madcap s in a j ffey
Squandered and lost amo g t his d bs and d ce
I m bundled naked out of house and home.
Chr You er chanced upon a mod rate man,
But now you ha e for uch a man am I
For m ch I joy n sa g no man more
And m ch i pe d ng when tis ght to spend
So go we in I long to introduce
My wife and only son whom most I lo e—
After yourself of course
We That I belie e.
Chr Why h uld one say what is not true to you?
Exeu t

Enter CA O *with the* CHO US OF EDY AGRI CULTU TS

Ca O ye who many a day ha chewed
a root of thyme with master
My labour lo ing illage fr ends,
be pleased to st p o t faster
Be staunch and str g and st ide lon
let nothing now delay you,
Your fo tunes lie upon the d
come sa e them quick I pray y u.
Chorus N w don t you see we e bu tling we
as fast as we can go, sir
We r not so y ung as o w were
and Ag is somewhat slo sir

We O pray don t
Chr Do you mean to answer?
We And if I do I m absolutely sure
You ll treat me ill you ll never let me go
Chr I vow we will at least if you desire it
We Then first unhand me
Chr There we both unhand you
We Then listen both for I it seems must needs
Reveal the secret I proposed to keep
Know then I m Wealth!
Chr You most abominable
Of all mankind you Wealth and keep it snug!
Ca You Wealth in such a miserable plight!
Chr O King Apollo! O ye Gods and daemons!
O Zeus! what mean you? are you really HE?
We I am
Chr Himself?
We His own self's self
Chr Whence come you
So grimed with dirt?
We From Patrocles s house
A man who never washed in all his life
Chr And this your sad affliction how came this?
We 'Twas Zeus that caused it jealous of mankind
For when a little chap I used to brag
I d visit none except the wise and good
And orderly he therefore made me blind
That I might ne er distinguish which was which
So jealous is he always of the good!
Chr And yet tis only from the just and good
His worship comes
We I grant you that
Chr Then tell me
If you could see again as once you could
Would you avoid the wicked?
We Yes I would
Chr And visit all the good?
We Yes more by token
I have not seen the good for many a day
Chr No more have I although I ve got my eyes
We Come let me go you know my story now
Chr And therefore truly hold we on the more
We I told you so you vowed you d let me go
I knew you wouldn t
Chr O be guided pray
And don t desert me Search where er you will
You ll never find a better man than I
Ca No more there is by Zeus—except myself
We They all say that but when in sober earnest
They find they ve got me and are wealthy men
They place no limit on their evil ways
Chr Too true! And yet not every one is bad
We Yes, every single one
Ca (*aside*) You ll smart for that
Chr Nay nay but hear what benefits you ll get
If you re presuaded to abide with us.
For well I trust —I trust with God to aid
That I shall rid you of this eye-disease,
And make you see
We For mercy s sake forbear
I do not wish to see again
Chr Eh? what?
Ca O why the man s a born unfortunate!
We Let Zeus but hear their follies and I know
He ll pay me out
Chr And doesn t he do that now
Letting you wander stumbling through the world?
We Eh but I m horribly afraid of Zeus!
Chr Aye say you so you cowardliest God alive?
What! do you think the imperial power of Zeus
And all his thunderbolts were worth one farthing
Could you but see for ever so short a time?
We Ah don t say that you wretches!
Chr Don t be frightened!
I ll prove that you re far stronger mightier far
Than Zeus.
We You ll prove that *I* am?
Chr Easily
Come what makes Zeus the Ruler of the Gods?
Ca His silver He s the wealthiest of them.
Chr Well
Who gives him all his riches?
Ca Our friend here.
Chr And for whose sake do mortals sacrifice
To Zeus?
Ca For *his* and pray straight out for wealth
Chr Tis all his doing and tis he can quickly
Undo it if he will
We How mean you that?
Chr I mean that nevermore will mortal man
Bring ox or cake or any sacrifice
If such thy will
We How so?
Chr How can he buy
A gift to offer if thy power deny
The needful silver? Single handed thou
If Zeus prove troublesome canst crush his power
We Men sacrifice to Zeus for *me*?
Chr They do
And whatsoever in the world is bright
And fair and graceful all is done for thee.
For every mortal thing subserves to Wealth.
Ca Hence for a little filthy lucre I m
A slave forsooth because I ve got no wealth
Chr And those Corinthian huzzies, so they say
If he who sues them for their love is poor
Turn up their noses at the man but grant
A wealthy suitor more than he desires
Ca So too the boy loves just to get some money
And not at all because they love their lovers
Chr Those are the baser not the nobler sort
These never ask for money
Ca No? what then?
Chr O one a hunter one a pack of hounds
Ca Ah they re ashamed I warrant of their vice
And seek to crust it over with a name
Chr And every art existing in the world
And every craft was for thy sake invented
For thee one sits and cobbles all the day
One works in bronze another works in wood
One fuses gold—the gold derived from thee—
Ca One plies the footpad s, one the burglar s trade
Chr One is a fuller one a sheepskin washer

Chr. And here, I see, comes Blepsidemus too.
Look! by his speed and bearing you can tell
He has heard a rumour of what's happening here.

Enter BLEPSIDEMUS.

Blepsidemus. What can it mean? Old Chremylus grown wealthy!
Then whence and how? I don't believe that story.
And yet by Heracles 'twas bruited wide
Amongst the loungers in the barbers' shops
That Chremylus had all at once grown rich.
And if he has, 'tis passing wonderful
That he should call his neighbours in to share.
That's not our country's fashion, anyhow.

Chr. I'll tell him everything. O Blepsidemus,
We're better off to-day than yesterday:
You are my friend, and you shall share in all.

Bl. What, are you really wealthy, as men say?

Chr. Well, if God will, I shall be presently.
But there's some risk, some risk, about it yet.

Bl. What sort of risk?

Chr. Such as—

Bl. Pray, pray go on.

Chr. If we succeed, we're prosperous all our lives:
But if we fail, we perish utterly.

Bl. I like not this: there's something wrong behind,
Some evil venture. To become off hand
So over-wealthy, and to fear such risks,
Smacks of a man who has done some rotten thing.

Chr. Rotten! what mean you?

Bl. If you've stolen aught,
Or gold or silver, from the God out there,
And now perchance repent you of your sin—

Chr. Apollo shield us! no, I haven't done that.

Bl. O don't tell *me*. I see it plainly now.

Chr. Pray don't suspect me of such crimes.

Bl. Alas!
There's nothing sound or honest in the world.
The love of money overcomes us all.

Chr. Now by Demeter, friend, you have lost your wits.

Bl. O how unlike the man he used to be!

Chr. Poor chap, you're moody mad: I vow you are.

Bl. His very eye's grown shifty: he can't look you
Straight in *the face: I warrant he's turned rogue.*

Chr. I understand. You think I've stolen something,
And want a share.

Bl. I want a share? in what?

Chr. But 'tis not so: the thing's quite otherwise.

Bl. Not stolen, but robbed outright?

Chr. The man's possessed!

Bl. Have you embezzled someone else's cash?

Chr. I haven't: no.

Bl. O Heracles, where now
Can a man turn? you won't confess the truth.

Chr. You bring your charge before you have heard the facts.

Bl. Now prithee let me hush the matter up
For a mere trifle, ere it all leaks out.
A few small coins will stop the speakers' mouths.

Chr. You'd like, I warrant, in your friendly way
To spend three minas, and to charge me twelve.

Bl. I see an old man pleading for his life
With olive branch in hand, and at his side
His weeping wife and children, shrewdly like
The suppliant Heracleids of Pamphilus.

Chr. Nay, luckless idiot, 'tis the good alone
And right and sober minded that I'm going
At once to make so wealthy.

Bl. Heaven and earth!
What, have you stolen so largely?

Chr. O confound it,
You'll be my death.

Bl. You'll be your own, I fancy.

Chr. Not so, you reprobate: 'tis Wealth I've got.

Bl. You, Wealth! What sort of wealth?

Chr. The God himself.

Bl. Where? where?

Chr. Within.

Bl. Where?

Chr. In my house.

Bl. In yours?

Chr. Yes.

Bl. You be hanged! Wealth in your house?

Chr. I swear it.

Bl. *Is this the truth?*

Chr. It is.

Bl. By Hestia?

Chr. Aye, by Poseidon.

Bl. Him that rules the sea?

Chr. If there's another, by that other too.

Bl. Then don't you send him round for friends to share?

Chr. Not yet: things haven't reached that stage.

Bl. What stage?
The stage *of sharing?*

Chr. Aye, we've first to—

Bl. What?

Chr. Restore the sight—

Bl. Restore the sight of whom?

Chr. The sight of Wealth, by any *means we can.*

Bl. What, is he really blind?

Chr. He really is.

Bl. O that is why he never came to me.

Chr. But now he'll come, if such the will of Heaven.

Bl. *Had we not better call a doctor in?*

Chr. Is there a doctor now in all the town?
There are no fees, and therefore there's no skill.

Bl. Let's think awhile.

Chr. There's none.

Bl. No more there is.

Chr. Why then, 'tis best to do what I intended,
To let him lie inside Asclepius' temple
A whole night long.

Bl. That's far the best, I swear it.
So don't be dawdling: quick, get something done.

Chr. I'm going.

Bl. Make you haste.

Chr. I'm doing that.

Enter POVERTY, *a wild looking woman.*

Poverty. You pair of luckless manikins who dare
A rash, unholy, lawless deed to do—
Where! What! Why flee ye? Tarry!

Bl. Heracles!

You'd think it fun to see us run
and that before you've told us
The reason why your master seems
so anxious to behold us.
Ca. Why, I've been telling long ago
'tis you are not attending!
He bade me call and fetch you all
that you, forever ending
This chill ungenial life of yours
might lead a life luxurious.
Ch. Explain to me how that can be;
i' faith I'm rather curious.
Ca. He's got a man, an ancient man,
of sorriest form and feature,
Bald, toothless, squalid, wrinkled, bent,
a very loathsome creature.
I really should not be surprised
to hear the wretch is circumcised.
Ch. O Messenger of golden news,
you thrill my heart with pleasure:
I do believe the man has come
with quite a heap of treasure!
Ca. O aye, he's got a heap, I guess,
a heap of woes and wretchedness.
Ch. You think, I see, you think you're free
to gull me with impunity.
No, no, my stick I've got, and quick
I'll get my opportunity.
Ca. What, think you I'm the sort of man
such things as that to do, sirs?
Am I the man a tale to tell
wherein there's nothing true, sirs?
Ch. How absolute the knave has grown!
your shins, my boy, are bawling
Ah! Ah! with all their might and main
for gyves and fetters calling.
Ca. You've drawn your lot, the grave you've got
to judge in: why delay now?
Old Charon gives the ticket there:
why don't you pass away now?
Ch. Go hang yourself, you peevish elf,
you born buffoon and scoffer.
You love to tantalize and tease,
nor condescend to offer
A word of explanation why
we're summoned here so hurriedly.
I had to shirk some urgent work
and here so quickly hasted
That many a tempting root of thyme
I passed, and left untasted.
Ca. I'll hide it not: 'tis Wealth we've got,
the God of wealth we've captured;
You'll all be rich and wealthy now.
Ha! don't you look enraptured?
Ch. He says we'll all be wealthy now!
upon my word this passes, sirs.
Ca. O yes, you'll all be Midases,
if only you've the asses' ears.
Ch. O I'm so happy, I'm so glad,
I needs must dance for jollity,
If what you say is really true,
and not your own frivolity.

Ca. And I before your ranks will go
Threttanelo! Threttanelo!
And I the Cyclops, heel and toe,
will dance the sailor's hornpipe—so!
Come up, come up, my little ones all,
come raise your multitudinous squall,
Come bleating loudly the tuneful notes
Of sheep and of rankly odorous goats.
Come follow along on your loves intent,
come goats, 'tis time to your meal ye went.
Ch. And you we'll seek where'er you go
Threttanelo! Threttanelo!
And you the Cyclops will we find
in dirty drunken sleep reclined,
Your well stuffed wallet beside you too
with many a potherb bathed in dew;
And then from out of the fire we'll take
A sharply pointed and burning stake,
And whirling it round till our shoulders ache,
its flame in your hissing eyeball slake.
Ca. And now I'll change to Circe's part
who mixed her drugs with baleful art;
Who late in Corinth, as I've learned,
Philonides's comrades turned
To loathsome swine in a loathsome sty,
And fed them all on kneaded dung
which, kneading, she amongst them flung.
And turn you all into swine will I,
And then ye'll grunt in your bestial glee
Wee! wee! wee!
Follow your mother, pigs, quoth she.
Ch. We'll catch you, Circe dear, we will,
who mix your drugs with baleful skill;
Who with enchantments strange and vile
ensnare our comrades and defile;
We'll hang you up as you erst were hung
By bold Odysseus, lady fair,
and then as if a goat you were
We'll rub your nose in the kneaded dung:
Like Aristyllus you'll gape with glee
Wee! wee! wee!
Follow your mother, pigs, quoth he.
Ca. But now, old mates, break off, break off,
no longer may we jest and scoff,
No longer play the fool to-day,
And ye must sail on another tack,
Whilst I behind my master's back
Rummage for meat and bread to eat,
And then, whilst yet the food I chew,
I'll join the work we are going to do.
Exit CARIO *to get his bread and meat; enter* CHREMYLUS.
Chr. To bid you "welcome," fellow burghers, now
Is old and musty; so I—clasp you all,
Ye who have come in this stout hearted way,
This strenuous way, this unrelaxing way
Stand by me now, and prove yourselves to-day
In very truth the Saviours of the God.
Ch. Fear not; I'll bear me like the God of War.
What! shall we push and hustle in the Assembly
To gain our three poor obols, and to-day
Let Wealth himself be wrested from our grasp?

Can you tell me, I pray a more excell nt way
of besto ng a boon o mankind?

Po. O men on the least pro ocat on prepa ed
to be crazy and out of your mind
Men bearded and old, et companions enrolled
in the Ord r f zan es and fools,
O at is th gain that the world would obtain
were it go erned by you and your rules?
W if Wealth should allot himself equally out
(assume that his sight e restore)
Then none would t sc nce his talents de ote
or practise a craft ny more
Yet if science and art from the world should depart
pray whom would e get for the future
T bend ou a shirt or your leather to snip,
or to make you a wheel or a suture?
Do e think that a man will be likely t tan,
or a smithy or laundry to keep,
Or t break u the sod w th his ploughshare, and toil
the fruits of Demeter to reap,
Ir regardless of t ese he can d ell t his ease,
a life w thout labour enjo g?

Chr Absurd! h the troubles and tasks you describe
we of course shall our servants emplo n.

Po. Your servants! B t how will ye get any now?
I pray you th secret t tell.

Chr W th the sil er we e got we can purchase a lot.

Po But who is the man that will sell?

Chr Some me chant from Thessaly comin belike
where most of the kidnappers dwell.
Who still, for the sake f the gain he will make,
w th the sla es that we want will pro ide us.

Po B t first I t m sa if we walk in the w y
wherein ye re seeking t guide us,
There'll be e er kidnapper left in th world.
merchant of course (can ye doubt t?)
His ... would xpose to such perils as those
had he plenty f money witho t t
No, no I m afraid you must handl th pade
and follow the p ou h-tail in person
Your life ul ha e double the toil nd the tr uble
t used to.

Chr Thyself be th curse on!

Po. N more on a bed will you pillow our head,
for th won t be a bed in th land
Nor carpets for whom will you find at the loom
hen he s plent f money hand?
Rich perfumes no more ill ye sprinkl and pour
as home ye are b inin the brid
Or ... the fair in habiliment are
so cunningly fashioned and dyed.
Y t of little a ail is your wealth if t fail
such enj yments as these to p ocure you.
Y fools, t is I who alone a supply
of the goods which ye covet ensure you
I t like Mistress, by Poverty s lash
constrainin the needy mechanic
When I raise t t earn his li ing h ll tur
and work in a terribl panic

Chr Why what ha e you got to bestow but a lot
of burns fr m the bath n room station
And a hollow-cheeked rabble of destitute ha s
and brats on the erge of t rvation?
And the l ce if you please nd the gnats and the fleas
whom I can t e en count for th ir numbers,
Who a ound ou all n ht will buzz and w ll bite
and arouse you betimes from your slumbers.
Upl p! the w ll s ll ts to hunger b t st ll
p up! to your pa n and pr at on."
For robe b t a rag for a bed but a bag
f ru hes wh ch harbour a nation
Of b gs whose en enomed nd tir less atta ks
would the soundest of sleeper waken
And then for a carpet a sodden old mat
which is falling t bits, must be taken
And a jolly hard tone for a pillow you ll own
and, for girdle cakes barle and wheaten,
Must lea es dr and lean of the radish or e en
sour stalks of the mallow be eaten.
And the head of a barrel, sto e in. *for a chair*
and ins ead of a trou h for your kneading
A stave of a at ou must borrow and that
all broken. So great and exceeding
Are the blessin s which Po erty bri in her train
on the children of men to bestow!

Po The life you define with such skill is not mine
tis the life of a beggar I trow

Chr Well, Po erty Beggary truly the twain
to be sisters we lways declare.

Po Aye *you!* who to good Thrasybulus forsooth
Dionysius the Tyrant mpare!
But the life I allot to m people is not,
nor hall be, so full of distresses.
'Tis a beg r al ne who has nought of his own,
nor e n a obol possesses.
My *poor* man, tis true, has to scr pe and t screw
and his work he must ne er be slack in
There ll be no superfluity found in his cot
but then the e will nothing be lackin.

Chr Damater! a life of th Blessed ou e
fore e to toil and to sla e
At Po erty call, and to lea e after al
not e en eno h for a gra e.

Po You are all for your jeers and our c medy sneers,
and yo can t be in earnest a minute
Nor observe that alike in their bodily frame
and the ... residing with n t.
My people are better than Wealth for by *him*
men bloated and gross are presented,
Fat rogues with bi bellies and dropsical legs,
whose toes by the gout ar tormented
B t mine are the lean and the wasplike and keen
who strik t their foemen and sting them.

Chr Ah yes to a wa like condition, no doubt
by the pinch of star ation you brin them.

Po I can show you besides that Decorum b des
w th those whom I ... that mine
Ar the modest and orderly folk, and that Wealth s
are with insolence flushed and with w ne.

Po I ll make you die a miserable death
For ye have dared a deed intolerable
Which no one else has ever dared to do
Or God or man! Now therefore ye must die
Chr But who are you that look so pale and wan?
Bl Belike some Fury from a tragic play
She has a wild and tragic sort of look
Chr No for she bears no torch
Bl The worse for her
Po What do you take me for?
Chr Some pot house girl
Or omelette seller else you would not bawl
At us so loudly ere you re harmed at all
Po Not harmed! Why is it not a shameful thing
That you should seek to drive me from the land?
Chr At all events you ve got the Deadman s Pit
But tell us quickly who and what you are
Po One who is going to pay you out to-day
Because ye seek to banish me from hence
Bl Is it the barmaid from the neighbouring tap
Who always cheats me with her swindling pint pots?
Po It s *Poverty* your mate for many a year!
Bl O King Apollo and ye Gods I m off
Chr Hi! What are you at? Stop stop you coward you
Stop can t you?
Bl Anything but that
Chr Pray stop
What! shall one woman scare away two men?
Bl But this is Poverty herself you rogue
The most destructive pest in all the world
Chr Stay I implore you stay
Bl Not I by Zeus
Chr Why this I tell you were the cowardliest deed
That ere was heard of did we leave the God
Deserted here and flee away ourselves
Too scared to strike one blow in his defence
Bl O on what arms what force can we rely?
Is there a shield a corslet anywhere
Which this vile creature has not put in pawn?
Chr Courage! the God will single-handed rear
A trophy o er this atrophied assailant
Po What! dare you mutter you two outcasts you
Caught in the act doing such dreadful deeds?
Chr O you accursed jade, why come you here
Abusing us? We never did you wrong
Po No wrong forsooth! O by the heavenly Powers
No wrong to *me* your trying to restore
Wealth s sight again?
Chr How can it injure *you*
If we are trying to confer a blessing
On all mankind?
Po Blessing! what blessing?
Chr What?
Expelling *you* from Hellas first of all
Po Expelling *me* from Hellas! Could you do
A greater injury to mankind than that?
Chr A greater? Yes by not expelling you
Po Now that s a question I am quite prepared
To argue out at once and if I prove
That I m the source of every good to men
And that by me ye live but if I fail
Then do thereafter whatsoe er ye list
Chr You dare to offer this, you vixen you?
Po And you accept it easily enough
Methinks I ll show you altogether wrong
Making the good men rich as you propose
Bl O clubs and pillories! To the rescue! Help!
Po Don t shout and storm before you have heard the facts.
Bl Who can help shouting when he hears such wild
Extravagant notions?
Po Any man of sense.
Chr And what s the penalty you ll bear in case
You lose the day?
Po Whate er you please
Chr Tis well.
Po But if ye are worsted ye must bear the same.
Bl (*to* CHREMYLUS) Think you that twenty deaths are fine enough?
Chr Enough for *her* but two will do for us
Po Well then be quick about it for indeed
How can my statements be with truth gainsaid?
Ch Find something I pray philosophic to say
whereby you may vanquish and rout her
No thought of retreat but her arguments meet
with arguments stronger and stouter
Chr All people with me I am sure will agree
for to all men alike it is clear
That the honest and true should enjoy as their due,
a successful and happy career
Whilst the lot of the godless and wicked should fall
in exactly the opposite sphere.
'Twas to compass this end that myself and my friend
have been thinking as hard as we can
And have hit on a nice beneficial device,
a truly magnificent plan
For if Wealth should attain to his eyesight again
nor amongst us so aimlessly roam
To the dwellings I know of the good he would go,
nor ever depart from their home
The unjust and profane with disgust and disdain
he is certain thereafter to shun
Till all shall be honest and wealthy at last
to virtue and opulence won
Is there any design more effective than mine
a blessing on men to confer?
Bl No nothing that s flat I will answer for that
so don t be inquiring of *her*
Chr For our life of to-day were a man to survey
and consider its chances aright
He might fancy I ween it were madness or even
the sport of some mischievous sprite.
So often the best of the world is possessed
by the most undeserving of men
Who have gotten their pile of money by vile
injustice so often again
The righteous are seen to be famished and lean
yea with *thee* as their comrade to dwell.
Now if Wealth were to night to recover his sight
and her from amongst us expel

CA. (singing) Sin we ith all our might Asclepius first and best
To men a glorious Light, Sire in his offspring b est.

Enter WIFE OF CHREMYLUS

WIFE. What means this shoutin ? Has good news am ed?
For I' e been sittin, till I m tired w thin
Waiting for him, and longing for good news.

CA. Bri wine bring ine, my mistress quaff yourself
The flowing bowl (you like t passing well)
I bring ou here all blessings in a l mp.

W There?

CA. That you'll learn from what I am going to say

W Be pleased t tell me ith what peed you can.

CA. Listen. I ll t ll you all this striking business
I from the foot on to the ers head.

W Not on my head, I pray you.

CA. N t the blessings
We ha e all got?

W Not all that trik g business.

CA. Soon as we eached th Temple of the God
Bri ng the man, most miserable then,
But bo so happy who so prosperous now?
Without delay w too him to the sea
And bathed him there.

W O what happy man,
The poor old fellow bathed in the cold sea!

CA. Then to the precinct f the God we went.
There on the altar hone -cakes and bakemeats
We e offered, food for the Hephaestian flame.
There laid w Wealth as custom bids and we
Each for himself stitched up a pallet near

W Were there no thers waiting to be healed?

CA. Neoclides was, for one the purblind man
Who in his thefts out shoots the keenest-e ed.
and ma others, sick w th e ery form
Of ailment. Soon the Temple se t
Put out the lights, and bad us fall sleep,
Nor stir nor peak, whate er noise we heard.
So down we lay in orderly r pose
And I could catch no sl mber not one wink,
Struck by a nice tureen of broth which stood
A l the distance from an old wife head,
Whereto I marvellously longed to creep
Then, glancing pwards, I behold the priest
Whipping the cheese-cakes and the figs fr m off
The holy table thenc he coasted ound
T every altar pying what was left.
And e ery thin he found he consecrated
I t a sort of sack so I concludin
This as the ri ht and pr per thing t do,
Arose at once t tackle that tureen

W U happy man! Did you not fear the God?

CA. Indeed I did, lest h hould cut in first,
Garlands and all, and captur my tureen
For so the priest forewarned me he might do.
Then the old lady whe my t ss heard
Reached out stealthy hand I ga e hiss,
and mouthed t gently like sacred snake.
Back ws her hand she dra s her co erl ts
Ro tightly ound her and, beneath them, lies

In deadly terror like a frightened cat
Then of the broth I gob led down a lot
Till I could eat no more, nd then I stopped.

W Did not the God approach you?

CA. Not till later
And then I did thing will make you la gh.
For s he neared me by some dire mishap
My wind exploded like a thunder-clap.

W I guess the God was awfully di gusted.

CA No, but Iaso blusl ed a rosy red
And Panacea turned away her head
Holdin her nose my w nd s not frankincense.

W But h himself?

CA Observ ed t not nor cared

W O why you re making out the God a clown!

CA No, no an ordure taster

W Oh! you wretch.

CA So then, alarmed, I muffled up my head
Whil t he went round w th calm nd quiet tread,
To e ery patient, scanning each disease.
Then by his side a ser ant placed a stone
Pestle and mortar and a medicine chest.

W A tone one?

CA Han it, not the medici e chest

W How saw you this, you illain, when your head
You said just now was muffled?

CA Through my cloak
Full many a peep-hole has that cloak, I trow
Well, first he set himself to mix pla r
For Neoclides, thro n n three clo es
Of Tenian garlic and w th these he mingled
Verjuic and squills and bra ed them up together
Then drenched the mass with Sph ttian vinegar
And turnin up the ey lids f th man
Pla tered their inner sides, to make the smart
More painful. Up h sprin s with yells and roars
I act to flee then la ghed the God and said,
N w sit thou there, beplaste ed I ll estrain thee,
Thou reckless swearer from the Assembly now

W O what a cle er patriot e God!

CA Then, f er this, he sat him d wn by Wealth,
And first h felt the patient s head nd next
Taking lin n napkin, clean and white,
W ped both his lids, and all around them, dry
Then Panacea w th a scarlet cloth
Co ered his face and head then the God clucked,
And out there issued from the holy shrine
Two g eat enormous serpents.

W O good h a ens!

CA And underneath the scar t cloth they crept
And licked his eyelids, as t seemed to me
And mistress dear before yo could ha e drunk
Of wine ten goblets, Wealth arose and saw
O th n for j y I clapped m hand to ther
And woke my master and hey prest I both
The God nd serpents anished in the shrine.
And those who lay by Wealth, ima n how
They blessed and g eeted him, nor closed their eyes
Th who e night lo g til dayli ht did ppear
And I could ne er praise the God enou h
For both his deeds, enablin Wealth t see
And makin Neocl ides still more blind.

Chr 'Tis an orderly job, then, to thieve and to rob
and to break into houses by night!
Bl Such modesty too! In whatever they do
they are careful to keep out of sight.
Po Behold in the cities the Orator tribe;
when poor in their early career,
How faithful and just to the popular trust,
how true to the State they appear.
When wealth at the City's expense they have gained,
they are worsened at once by the pelf:
Intriguing the popular cause to defeat,
attacking the People itself.
Chr That is perfectly true, though 'tis spoken by you,
you spiteful malevolent witch!
But still you shall squall for contending that all
had better be poor than be rich.
So don't be elate, for a terrible fate
shall your steps overtake before long.
Po Why, I haven't yet heard the ghost of a word
to prove my contention is wrong.
You splutter and try to flutter and fly,
but of argument never a letter.
Chr Pray why do all people abhor you and shun?
Po Because I'm for making them better.
So children, we see, from their parents will flee,
who would teach them the way they should go.
So hardly we learn what is right to discern,
so few what is best for them know.
Chr Then Zeus, I suppose, is mistaken, nor knows
what most for his comfort and bliss is,
Since money and pelf he acquires for himself,
Bl And *her* to the earth he dismisses.
Po O dullards and blind! full of styes is your mind,
there are tumours titanic within it.
Zeus wealthy! Not he: he's as poor as can be,
and this I can prove in a minute.
If Zeus be so wealthy, how came it of yore
that out of his riches abounding
He could find but a wreath of wild olive for those
who should win at the games he was founding
By all the Hellenes in each fourth year
on Olympia's plains to be holden?
If Zeus were as wealthy and rich as you say,
the wreath should at least have been golden.
Chr It is plain, I should think, 'tis from love of the chink
that the conduct you mention arises:
The God is unwilling to lavish a doit
of the money he loves upon prizes.
The rubbish may go to the victors below,
the gold he retains in his coffers.
Po How dare you produce such a libel on Zeus,
you couple of ignorant scoffers?
'Twere better, I'm sure, to be honest and poor
than rich and so stingy and screwing.
Chr Zeus crown you, I pray, with the wild olive spray,
and send you away to your ruin!
Po To think that you dare to persist and declare
that Poverty does not present you
With all that is noblest and best in your lives!
Chr Will Hecate's judgement content you?
If you question her which are the better, the rich
or the poor, she will say, I opine,
Each month do the wealthy a supper provide
to be used in my service divine,
But the poor lie in wait for a snatch at the plate
or e'er it is placed on my shrine.
So away, nor retort with a g-r-r, you degraded
Importunate scold!
Persuade me you may, but I won't be persuaded.
Po O Argos, behold!
Chr Nay, Pauson, your messmate, to aid you invite.
Po O woe upon woe!
Chr Be off to the ravens; get out of my sight.
Po O where shall I go?
Chr Go? Go to the pillory: don't be so slack,
Nor longer delay.
Po Ah me, but ye'll speedily send for me back
Who scout me to-day!

Exit

Chr When we send for you, come: not before. So farewell!
With Wealth as my comrade 'tis better to dwell;
Get you gone and bemoan your misfortunes alone.
Bl I too have a mind for an opulent life
Of revel and mirth with my children and wife,
Untroubled by Poverty's panics.
And then as I'm passing all shiny and bright
From my bath to my supper, what joy and delight
My fingers to snap in disdain at the sight
Of herself and her frowsy mechanics.
Chr That cursed witch, thank Heaven, has gone and left us.
But you and I will take the God at once
To spend the night inside Asclepius' Temple.
Bl And don't delay one instant, lest there come
Some other hindrance to the work in hand.
Chr Hi! boy there, Cario, fetch me out the blankets,
And bring the God himself with due observance,
And whatsoever is prepared within.

After 626 they all quit the stage. A whole night is supposed to pass, and next day CARIO *suddenly runs in with joyful news. He addresses the* CHORUS *in the orchestra*

Ca Here's joy, here's happiness, old friends, for you
Who at the feast of Theseus many a time
Have ladled up small sops of barley broth!
Here's joy for you and all good folk besides.
Ch How now, you best of all your fellow knaves?
You seem to come a messenger of good.
Ca With happiest fortune has my master sped,
Or rather Wealth himself: no longer blind,
He hath relumed the brightness of his eyes,
So kind a Healer hath Asclepius proved.
Ch (*singing*) Joy for the news you bring,
Joy! Joy! with shouts I sing.
Ca Aye, will you, nill you, it is joy indeed.

G. M. This too I bring, an offering to the God.

Ca. That's not the robe you were initiate in?

G. M. No, but I shivered thirteen years therein.

Ca. Those shoes?

G. M. Have weathered many a storm with me.

Ca. And them you bring as votive offerings?

G. M. Yes.

Ca. What charming presents to the God you bring!

Enter INFORMER *and* WITNESS.

Informer O me unlucky! O my hard, hard fate!
O thrice unlucky, four times, five times, yea
Twelve times, ten thousand times! O woe is me,
So strong the spirit of ill-luck that swamps me.

Ca. Apollo shield us and ye gracious Gods,
What dreadful misery has this poor wretch suffered?

In. What misery quoth a? Shameful, scandalous wrong.
Why all my goods are spirited away
Through this same God, who shall be blind again
If any justice can be found in Hellas.

G. M. Methinks I've got a glimmering of the truth.
This is some wretched fellow come to grief
Because he's metal of the baser sort.

Ca. Then well done he to come to wrack and ruin.

In. Where, where is he who promised he would make
All of us wealthy in a trice, if only
He could regain his sight? Some of us truly
He has brought to *ruin rather than to wealth.*

Ca. Whom has he brought to ruin?

In. Me, this chap.

Ca. One of the rogues and housebreakers perchance?

In. O aye, by Zeus, and you require rotten too.
'Tis you have got my goods, I do believe.

Ca. How bold, Demeter, has the Informing rogue
Come blustering in! 'Tis plain he's hunger mad.

In. You, sirrah, come to the market place at once.
There to be broken on the wheel, and forced
To tell your misdemeanours.

Ca. You be hanged!

G. M. O if the God would extirpate the whole
Informer brood, right well would he deserve,
O Saviour Zeus, of all the Hellenic race!

In. You jeer me too? Alack, you shared the spoil,
Or whence that brand new cloak? I'll take my oath
I saw you yesterday in a gaberdine.

G. M. I fear you not. I wear an amulete.
A ring Eudemus sold me for a drachma.

Ca. 'Tis not inscribed "For an Informer's bite."

In. Is not this insolence? You jest and jeer
And have not told me what you are doing here.
'Tis for no good you two are here, I'm thinking.

Ca. Not for *your* good, you may be sure of that.

In. For off my goods you are going to dine, I trow.

Ca. O that in very truth you'd burst asunder
You and your witness, crammed with nothingness.

In. Dare you deny it? In your house they are cooking
A pretty lot of flesh and fish, you miscreants.
The INFORMER *gives five double sniffs.*

Ca. Smell you aught, lackpurse?

G. M. Maybe 'tis the cold
Look what a wretched gaberdine he's wearing.

In. O Zeus and Gods, can such affronts be borne
From rogues like these? O me, how vexed I am
That I a virtuous patriot get such treatment.

Ca. What you a virtuous patriot?

In. No man more so.

Ca. Come then, I'll ask you — Answer me.

In. Well.

Ca. Are you A farmer?

In. Do you take me for a fool?

Ca. A merchant?

In. Aye, I feign so, on occasion.

Ca. Have you learned any trade?

In. No, none by Zeus.

Ca. Then how and whence do you earn your livelihood?

In. All public matters and all private too
Are in my charge.

Ca. How so?

In. *'Tis I who will.*

Ca. You virtuous, housebreaker? When all men hate you
Meddling with matters which concern you not.

In. What think you, booby, it concerns me not
To aid the State with all my might and main?

Ca. To aid the State! Does that mean mischief making?

In. It means upholding the established laws
And punishing the rogues who break the same.

Ca. I thought the State appointed Justices
For this one task.

In. And who's to prosecute?

Ca. Whoever will.

In. I am that *man who will.*
Therefore, at last, the State depends on me.

Ca. Fore Zeus, a worthless leader it has got.
Come, *will* you this, to lead a quiet life
And peaceful?

In. That's a sheep's Life you're describing,
Living with nothing in the world to do.

Ca. Then you won't change?

In. Not if you gave me all
Battus's silphium, aye and Wealth to boot.

Ca. Put off your cloak!

G. M. Fellow to you he's speaking.

Ca. And then your shoes.

G. M. All this to you he's speaking.

In. I dare you all. Come on and tackle me
Whoever will.

Ca. I am that *man who will.*

Exit WITNESS.

In. O me, they are stripping me in open day.

Ca. You choose to live by mischief making do you?

In. What are you at? I call you, friend, to witness.

Ca. Methinks the witness that you brought has cut it.

In. O me! I am trapped alone.

Ca. Aye, now you are roaring.

Wi O Lord and King what mighty power is thine!
But prithee where is Wealth?
Ca He s coming here
With such a crowd collected at his heels.
For all the honest fellows who before
Had scanty means of living flocking round
Welcomed the God and clasped his hand for joy
—Though others wealthy rascals who had gained
Their pile of money by unrighteous means
Wore scowling faces knitted up in frowns —
But those went following on begarlanded
With smiles and blessings and the old men s shoes
Rang out in rhythmic progress as they marched
Now therefore all arise with one accord
And skip and bound and dance the choral dance
For nevermore returning home ye ll hear
Those fatal words No barley in the bin!
Wi By Hecate for this good news you bring
I ve half a mind to crown you with a wreath
Of barley loaves
Ca Well don t be loitering now
The men by this are nearly at your gates.
Wi Then I will in and fetch the welcoming gifts
Wherewith to greet these newly *purchased*—eyes.
Exit WIFE.
Ca And I will out and meet them as they come.
Exit CARIO *Enter* WEALTH *alone to him later* CHREMYLUS *with a crowd at his heels*
We And first I make obeisance to yon sun
Then to august Athene s famous plain
And all this hospitable land of Cecrops
Shame on my past career! I blush to think
With whom I long consorted unawares,
Whilst those who my companionship deserved
I shunned not knowing O unhappy me!
In neither this nor that I acted rightly
But now reversing all my former ways
I ll show mankind twas through no wish of mine
I used to give myself to rogues and knaves
Chr Hang you be off! the nuisance these friends are
Emerging suddenly when fortune smiles
Tchal How they nudge your ribs and punch your shins
Displaying each some token of goodwill
What man addressed me not? What aged group
Failed to enwreathe me in the market place?
Enter WIFE
Wi Dearest of men O welcome you and you
Come now I ll take these welcoming gifts and pour them
O er *you* as custom bids
We Excuse me no
When first I m entering with my sight restored
Into a house, twere meeter far that I
Confer a largess rather than receive
Wi Then won t you take the welcoming gifts I bring?
We Aye by the hearth within as custom bids
So too we scape the vulgar tricks of farce
It is not meet with such a Bard as ours
To fling a shower of figs and comfits out
Amongst the audience just to make them laugh
Wi Well said indeed for Dexinicus there
Is rising up to scramble for the figs
They all enter the house henceforth CARIO *and* CHREMYLUS *come out by turns they are never on the stage together Some interval elapses before* CARIO *s first entrance*
Ca How pleasant tis to lead a prosperous life
And that expending nothing of one s own
Into this house a heap of golden joys
Has hurled itself though nothing wrong we ve done
Truly a sweet and pleasant thing is wealth
With good white barley is our garner filled
And all our casks with red and fragrant wine
And every vessel in the house is crammed
With gold and silver wonderful to see
The tank o erflows with oil the oil flasks teem
With precious unguents and the loft with figs
And every cruet pitcher pannikin
Is turned to bronze the mouldy trencherlets
That held the fish are all of silver now
Our lantern all at once is ivory framed
And we the servants play at odd or even
With golden staters and to cleanse us use
Not stones but garlic leaves so nice we are
And master now with garlands round his brow
Is offering up hog goat and ram within
But me the smoke drove out I could not bear
To stay within it bit my eyelids so
Enter a prosperous and well dressed citizen with an attendant carrying a tattered gaberdine and a disreputable pair of shoes
Good Man Now then young fellow come along with me
To find the God
Ca Eh? Who comes here I wonder
G M A man once wretched but so happy now
Ca One of the honest sort I dare aver
G M Aye aye
Ca What want you now?
G M I am come to thank
The God great blessings hath he wrought for me.
For I inheriting a fair estate
Used it to help my comrades in their need
Esteeming that the wisest thing to do
Ca I guess your money soon began to fail
G M Aye that it did!
Ca And then you came to grief
G M Aye that I did! And I supposed that they
Whom I had succoured in their need would now
Be glad to help me when in need myself
But all slipped off as though they saw me not
Ca And jeered you I ll be bound
G M Aye that they did!
The drought in all my vessels proved my ruin
Ca But not so now
G M Therefore with right good cause
I come with thankfulness to praise the God
Ca But what s the meaning by the Powers of that
That ancient gaberdine your boy is bearing?

Ch. Nay rather gr n quite rotten, I should say.
O.L. O you could draw me throu h a ring, I know.
Ch. A ring? A hoop that round a sieve could go.
O.L. O here comes he of whom I ve been complaining
All this long while: this is that very lad!
Bound to some r el surely.
Ch. So it seems.
At least, he has got the chaplets and the torch.
Enter YOUTH
Youth. Friends, I salute ou.
O.L. Eh?
Yo. Mine ancient flame
How ery suddenly you ve got grey hair.
O.L. O me, the insults I am forced to bear.
Ch. 'Tis years since last he saw you, I dare say.
O.L. What, ears, you wretch? He saw me yesterday!
Ch. Why then, his case is different from the rest
When in his cups, methinks, he sees the best.
O.L. No, this is just his na ghty saucy way.
Yo. O Gods of eld! Poseidon of the Main!
What countless rinkles does her face contain!
O.L. O O!
Keep our torch off me, do.
Ch. In that she s right.
For if one spark pon her skin should light,
'Twould set her blazing, like a shri elled wreath.
Yo. Come, shall we play together?
O.L. Where? for shame!
Yo. Here with some nuts.
O.L. And what s your little game?
Yo. How many teeth you ve got.
Ch. How many teeth?
I'll make a guess at that. Sh s three, no, four.
Yo. Pay p you e lost one grinder and no more.
O.L. Wretch, are you crazy that you make your friend
A washing pot before so many men?
Yo. Were you well washed, t would do you good belike.
Ch. No, no, she s got up for the market now
But if her white lead paint were washed way
Too plain you d see the tatters of her face.
O.L. So old and saucy! Are y u crazy too?
Yo. What, is he trying to corrupt you, lo e,
Toying and fondling you when I m not looking?
O.L. By Aphrodite, no, you illain you!
Ch. No, no, by Hecate, I m not so daft.
B t come, my boy I really can t allow you
T hate the girl.
Yo. Hate her? I lo e her dearly.
Ch. I t she omplains of—
Yo. What?
Ch. Your flouts and jeers,
Sending her word, Lon sinc t in war s alarms
Were the Milesians lusty men-at-arms.
Yo. Well, I won t fight you for her sake.
Ch. How mean you?
Yo. For I respect your age, since be you sure
It is not e ery body I d permit
To take my girl. You take her and begone.
Ch. I know I know your drift no longer now
You d keep her company.
O.L. Who ll permit *that*?
Yo. I won t have a ything to do with one
Who has been the sport of thirteen thousand—suns.
Ch. But howsoe er as you drank the w ne,
You should in justice also dr nk the dregs.
Yo. Pheu! but they re such very old and fusty dregs!
Ch. Won t a dreg strainer remedy all that?
Yo. Well, go ye in. I want to dedicate
The wreaths I am wea in g to this gracious God.
O.L. Aye then I want to tell him something too.
Yo. Aye then, I ll not go in.
Ch. Come, don t be frightened.
Why she won t ravish you.
Yo. *I m glad to hear it.*
I e had enough of her in days gone by.
O.L. Come go you on I ll follow close behind.
Ch. O Zeus and King the ancient woman sticks
T ght as a limpet to her poor young man.

They ll enter the house and the door s shut. HERMES *enters knocks and hides himself* CAR IO *opens and sees o ne coming out he bears a pot containi g tripe and vitty water*

Ca. Who s knocking at the door? Hallo, what s this!
'Twas nobody it seems. The door shall smart,
Making that row for nothing.
Hermes. Hoi you sir
St p, Cario! don t go in.
Ca. Hallo, you fellow
Was that you banging at the door so loudly?
He. No, I was goi g to when you flung it open.
But run you in and call your master out
And then his wife, and then his little ones,
And then the serving men and then the dog,
And then yourself, and then the sow.
Ca. (*severely*) Now tell me
What all this means.
He. It means that Zeus is going
To mix you up, you rascal, in one dish,
And hurl yo all into the Deadman s Pit!
Ca. *Now for this herald must the tongue be cut.*
But what s the reason that he is going to do us
Such a bad turn?
He. Because ye ha e done the basest
And worst of deeds. *Since Wealth began to see,*
No laurel meal-cak v ctim, frankincense,
Has any man on any altar laid
Or aught besid
Ca. Or e er will for scant
Your care for us in the evil days gone by.
H And for the other Gods I m less concerned
But I myself am smashed and rui ed
Ca. Good
He. For until now the ta ern wi es would bring
From ea ly dawn fi s, honey t psy-cake,
T tbits for H rmes, uch as Hermes lo ed
B t now I idly *cross my legs and starve.*

In O me! once more

Ca (*to* GOOD MAN) Hand me your gaberdine
I'll wrap this rogue of an Informer in it

G M Nay that long since is dedicate to Wealth

Ca Where can it then more aptly be *suspended*
Than on a rogue and housebreaker like this?
Wealth we will decorate with nobler robes

G M How shall we manage with my cast off
shoes?

Ca Those on his forehead as upon the stock
Of a wild olive will I nail at once

In I'll stay no longer for alone I am weaker
I know than you but give me once a *comrade*
A *willing* one and ere the day is spent
I'll bring this lusty God of yours to justice
For that being only one he is overthrowing
Our great democracy nor seeks to gain
The Council's sanction or the Assembly's either

Exit INFORMER

G M Aye run you off accoutred as you are
In all my panoply and take the station
I held erewhile beside the bath room fire
The Coryphaeus of the starvelings there

Ca Nay but the keeper of the baths will drag him
Out by the ears for he'll at once perceive
The man is metal of the baser sort
But go we in that you may pray the God

The GOOD MAN *and* CARIO *enter the house Enter* OLD LADY *with attendant carrying cakes and sweetmeats on a tray*

Old Lady Pray have we really reached you dear
old men
The very dwelling where this new God dwells?
Or have we altogether missed the way?

Ch No you have really reached his very *door*
You dear young girl for *girl like is your speech*

O L O then I'll summon one of those within

Enter CHREMYLUS

Chr Nay for unsummoned I have *just come out*
So tell me freely what has brought you here

O L O sad my dear and anguished is my lot
For ever since this God began *to see*
My life's been not worth living all through *him*

Chr What were you too a she informer then
Amongst the women?

O L No indeed not I

Chr Or not elected sat you judging—*wine?*

O L You jest but I poor soul am misery stung

Chr What kind of misery stings you? tell me
quick

O L Then listen I'd a lad that loved me well
Poor but so handsome and so fair to see
Quite virtuous too whate'er I wished he did
In such a nice and gentlemanly way
And what he wanted I in turn supplied

Chr What were the things he asked you to supply?

O L Not many so prodigious the respect
In which he held me Twould be twenty drachmas
To buy a cloak and maybe eight for shoes
Then for his sisters he would want a gown
And just one mantle for his mother's use
And twice twelve bushels of good wheat perchance.

Chr Not many truly were the gifts he asked!
Tis plain he held you in immense respect

O L And these he wanted not for greed he swore,
But for love's sake that when my robe he wore
He might by that remember me the more

Chr A man prodigiously in love indeed!

O L Aye but the scamp's quite other minded
now
He's altogether changed from what he was.
So when I sent him this delicious cake,
And all these bon bons here upon the tray
Adding a whispered message that I hoped
To come at even—

Chr Tell me what he did?

O L He sent them back and sent this cream cake
too
Upon condition that I come no more
And *said withal* Long since in war's alarms
Were the Milesians lusty men at arms

Chr O then the lad's not vicious now he's rich
He cares for broth no longer though before
When he was poor he snapped up anything

O L O by the Twain and every day before,
He used to come a suppliant to my door

Chr What for your funeral?

O L No he was but fain
My voice to hear

Chr Your bounty to obtain

O L When in the dumps he'd smother me with
love
Calling me little duck and little dove.

Chr And then begged something for a pair of
shoes

O L And if perchance when riding in my coach
At the Great Mysteries some gallant threw
A glance my way he'd beat me black and blue,
So very jealous had the young man grown

Chr Aye aye he liked to eat his cake alone.

O L He vowed my hands were passing fair and
white

Chr With twenty drachmas in them—well he
might

O L And much he praised the fragrance of my
skin

Chr No doubt no doubt If Thasian you poured
in

O L And then he swore my glance was soft and
sweet

Chr He was no fool he knew the way to eat
The goodly substance of a fond old dame

O L O then my dear the God is much to blame
He said he'd right the injured every one

Chr What shall he do? speak and the thing is done.

O L He should by Zeus this graceless youth
compel
To recompense the love that loved him well
Or no good fortune on the lad should light

Chr Did he not then repay you every night?

O L He'd never leave me all my life he said

Chr And rightly too but now he counts you dead

O L My dear with love's fierce pangs I've pined
away

Chr. Nay rather grown quite rotten, I should say.
O.L. O you could draw me through a ring, I know.
Chr. A ring? A hoop that round a sieve could go.
O.L. O, here comes he of whom I've been complaining.
Look, here he comes! this is that very lad!
Bound to some revel surely.
Chr. So it seems.
At least, he has got the chaplets and the torch.

Enter YOUTH.

Youth. Friends, I salute you.
O.L. Eh?
Yo. Mine ancient flame,
How very suddenly you've got grey hair.
O.L. O me, the insults I am forced to bear.
Chr. 'Tis years since last he saw you, I dare say.
O.L. What years, you wretch? He saw me yesterday!
Chr. Why then, his case is different from the rest;
When in his cups, methinks, he sees the best.
O.L. No, this is just his naughty saucy way.
Yo. O Gods of old! Poseidon of the Main!
What countless wrinkles does her face contain!
O.L. O! O!
Keep your torch off me, do.
Chr. In that she's right.
For if one spark upon her skin should light,
'Twould set her blazing like a shrivelled wreath.
Yo. Come, shall we play together?
O.L. Where? for shame!
Yo. Here with some nuts.
O.L. And what's your little game?
Yo. How many teeth you've got.
Chr. How many teeth?
I'll make a guess at that. She's three, no, four.
Yo. Pay up; you've lost: one grinder and no more.
O.L. Wretch, are you crazy that you make your friend
A washing-pot before so many men?
Yo. Were you well washed, 'twould do you good belike.
Chr. No, no, she's got up for the market now.
But if her white-lead paint were washed away,
Too plain you'd see the tatters of her face.
O.L. So old and saucy! Are you crazy too?
Yo. What, is he trying to corrupt you, love,
Toying and fondling you when I'm not looking?
O.L. By Aphrodite, no, you villain you!
Chr. No, no, by Hecate, I'm not so daft.
But come, my boy, I really can't allow you
To hate the girl.
Yo. Hate her? I love her dearly.
Chr. Yet she complains of—
Yo. What?
Chr. Your flouts and jeers.
Sending her word, Long since, in war's alarms
Were the Milesians lusty men-at-arms.
Yo. Well, I won't fight you for her sake.
Chr. How mean you?
Yo. For I respect your age, since be you sure
It is not every body I'd permit
To take my girl. You, take her and begone.
Chr. I know, I know your drift; no longer now
You'd keep her company.
O.L. Who'll permit *that*?
Yo. I won't have anything to do with one
Who has been the sport of thirteen thousand—suns.
Chr. But howsoever, as you drank the wine,
You should, *in justice*, also drink the dregs.
Yo. Pheugh! they're such very old and fusty dregs!
Chr. Won't a dreg-strainer remedy all that?
Yo. Well, go ye in. I want to dedicate
The wreaths I am wearing to this gracious God.
O.L. Aye then, I want to tell him something too.
Yo. Aye then, I'll not go in.
Chr. Come, don't be frightened.
Why, she won't ravish you.
Yo. I'm glad to hear it.
I've had enough of her in days gone by.
O.L. Come, go you on. I'll follow close behind.
Chr. O Zeus and King, the ancient woman sticks
Tight as a limpet to her poor young man.

They all enter the house, and the door is shut. HERMES *enters, knocks and hides himself.* CARIO *opens, and sees no one; coming out he bears a pot containing tripe and dirty water.*

Ca. Who's knocking at the door? Hallo, what's this!
'Twas nobody, *it seems*. The door shall smart,
Making that row for nothing.
Hermes. Hoi, you sir,
Stop, Cario! don't go in.
Ca. Hallo, you fellow,
Was that you banging at the door so loudly?
He. No, I was going to when you flung it open.
But run you in and call your master out,
And then his wife, and then his little ones,
And then the serving-men, and then the dog,
And then yourself, and then the sow.
Ca. (*severely*) Now tell me
What all this means.
He. It means that Zeus is going
To mix you up, you rascal, in one dish,
And hurl you all into the Deadman's Pit!
Ca. Now for this herald must the tongue be cut.
But what's the reason that he is going to do us
Such a bad turn?
He. Because you have done the basest
And worst of deeds. Since Wealth began to see,
No laurel, meal-cake, victim, frankincense,
Has any man on any altar laid
Or aught beside.
Ca. Or ever will; for scant
Your care for us in the evil days gone by.
He. And for the other Gods I'm less concerned,
But I myself am smashed and ruined.
Ca. Good.
He. For until now the tavern-wives would bring
From early dawn figs, honey, tansy-cake,
Titbits for Hermes, such as Hermes loved;
But now I idly cross my legs and starve.

In O me! once more

Ca (*to* GOOD MAN) Hand me your gaberdine
I'll wrap this rogue of an Informer in it

G M Nay that long since is dedicate to Wealth

Ca Where can it then more aptly be suspended
Than on a rogue and housebreaker like this?
Wealth we will decorate with nobler robes

G M How shall we manage with my cast off shoes?

Ca Those on his forehead as upon the stock
Of a wild olive will I nail at once

In I'll stay no longer for alone I am weaker
I know than you but give me once a comrade
A *willing* one and ere the day is spent
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Bakis, Boeotian seer of Helicon; there was a collection current of his oracles, *K.* 23, 003 *P* 071

Ca And rightly too who though such gifts you got
Would wrong the givers
He O my hapless lot!
O me the Fourth-day cake in days gone by!
Ca You want the absent nought avails your cry
He O me, the gammon which was erst my fare!
Ca Here play your game on bladders, in the air
He O me the inwards which I ate so hot!
Ca In your own inwards now a pain you ve got
He O me, the tankard brimmed with half and half!
Ca Begone your quickest taking this to quaff
He Will you not help a fellow knave to live?
Ca If anything you want is mine to give
He O could you get me but one toothsome loaf,
Or from the sacrifice you make within
One slice of lusty meat?
Ca No exports here.
He O whenso er your master s goods you stole
Twas I that caused you to escape detection
Ca Upon condition ruffian that you shared
The spoils A toothsome cake would go to you
He And then you ate it every bit yourself.
Ca But you remember never shared the kicks
Were I perchance detected at my tricks
He Well don t bear malice if you ve Phyle got
But take me in to share your happy lot
Ca What leave the Gods, and settle here below?
He For things look better here than there I trow
Ca Think you Desertion is a name so grand?
He Where most I prosper there s my father land
Ca How could we use you if we took you in?
He Install me here, the Turn god by the door
Ca The Turn god? Turns and twists we want no more.
He The God of Commerce?
Ca Wealth we ve got nor need
A petty huckstering Hermes now to feed
He The God of Craft?
Ca Craft? quite the other way
Not craft but Honesty we need to day
He The God of guidance?
Ca Wealth can see my boy!
A guide no more tis needful to employ
He The God of games? Aha I ve caught you there
For Wealth is always highly sympathetic
With literary games and games athletic
Ca How lucky tis to have a lot of names!
He has gained a living by that God of games
Not without cause our Justices contrive
Their names to enter in more lists than one
He Then on these terms I enter?
Ca Aye come in
And take these guts and wash them at the well
And so at once be Hermes Ministrant

Exeunt CARIO *and* HERMES

Enter the PRIEST OF ZEUS SOTER *to find* CHREMYLUS

Priest O tell me where may Chremylus be found?
Chr (*entering*) What cheer my worthy fellow?
Pr What but ill?
For ever since this Wealth began to see,
I m downright famished I ve got nought to eat
And that although I m Zeus the Saviour s priest
Chr O by the Powers and what s the cause of that?
Pr No man will slay a victim now
Chr Why not?
Pr Because they all are wealthy yet before
When men had nothing one a merchant saved
From voyage perils one escaped from law
Would come and sacrifice or else at home
Perform his vows, and summon me, the priest
But not a soul comes now or body either
Except a lot of chaps to do their needs
Chr Then don t you take your wonted toll of that?
Pr So I ve myself a mind to cut the service
Of Zeus the Saviour now and settle here
Chr Courage! God willing all will yet be well
For Zeus the Saviour is himself within
Coming unasked
Pr O excellent good news!
Chr So we ll at once install—but bide awhile—
Wealth in the place where he was erst installed
Guarding the Treasury in Athene s Temple
Hi! bring me lighted candles Take them you,
And march before the God
Pr With all my heart
Chr Call Wealth out somebody

Enter OLD LADY *from the house*

O L And I?
Chr O you
Here balance me these installation pots
Upon your head and march along in state
You ve got your festive robes at all events
O L But what I came for?
Chr Everything is right
The lad you love shall visit you to night
O L O if you pledge your honour that my boy
Will come to night I ll bear the pots with joy
Chr These pots are not like other pots at all
In other pots the mother is atop
But here the mother s underneath the pot
Ch Tis the end of the Play and we too must delay
our departure no longer but hasten away
And follow along at the rear of the throng
rejoicing and singing our festival song

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Melian Gulf *L* 1169
Melistiche *E* 46
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Melitides a stupid man *F* 991
Memnon son of Eos slain by Achilles *C* 622 *F* 963
Menelaus, husband of Helen *B* 509 *L* 155
Messene (Messenia) a district in the southwestern Peloponnesus, whence Sparta recruited its helots, *L* 1142

Simonides of Ceos, a lyric poet, 556-467 B.C., K. 140, C 1356, W 1410

[illegible], earliest of mankind, K 391

Sitalces, king of the Odrysians in Thrace, allied with Athens, K 134

Smicythes (or Smicython) an effeminate, K 969, E 5

Smoios, a disreputable man, E 846

Socrates, the philosopher, C 104 etc., B 1553 F

Solon, the great lawgiver of Athens, born about 638 B.C., died about 558, C 118

Sophocles, the tragic poet, born B.C. 495, died about 406, P 531 695, B 100

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[illegible], a Phrygian who tried to get on the register of Athenian citizens, B 762

Sporgilus, barber B 300

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Stheneboea, a play by Euripides. Stheneboea fell in love with Bellerophon, F 1043

Stilbides, diviner P 1032

Straton, an effeminate, K 1374, B. 942

Strymodorus, [illegible]

Styx, a river in the lower regions, F 470

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Sybaris, luxurious city in southern Italy W 1435

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Taenarum, promontory of Laconia, where stood a temple of Poseidon, [illegible] F 187

Tartarus, the underworld, B 693

Tartessian lampreys, from Tartessus in Spain, F 475

Taygetus, a mountain range between Sparta and Messenia, L 117 [illegible] 96

Teleas, a [illegible] B 168 [illegible] 100, P 1008

Telephus, [illegible] by Euripides, acted 438 B.C. Telephus was son of Heracles and Auge, exposed as an infant, and grew up [illegible] to power [illegible] the tale [illegible] 415-43[illegible] C 92[illegible] F 8[illegible] 400

Te[illegible], musician, [illegible]

Tereus, husband of Procne B [illegible] L 562

Teucer, noted archer in the Trojan War F 1041

Thales of Miletus, one of the Seven Wise Men, C 180, B 1009

The[illegible], of Acharnae, who never left home without consulting the shrine of Hecate at his house-door L 64

Theogenes, a needy braggart B 822, 11[illegible]

Themistocles, the victor of Salamis, an Athenian statesman, K 84 813 833

Theognis, a dull frigid poet, nicknamed Snow A 11 140, W 1183, T 170

Theorus, a politician, A 134 C 400 W 42, 599, 1240

Theramenes, the Trimmer, a prominent statesman and general, became notorious for his changes of opinion, and in particular for his treachery to his fellow generals after the battle of Arginusae, 406 B.C., F 541 967

Theseum, the temple of Theseus, a sanctuary K 1312

Theseus, legendary king of Attica, F 142

Thetis, mother of Achilles, C 1067

Thorycion, F 362, 382

Thoumantes, a secretary under Cleon, K 1103

Thrace, a country northeast of Greece P 83

Thrasybulus, son of Lycus, who delivered Athens from the Thirty Tyrants, 404 3 B.C., killed at Aspendus 390, E 203, 356, Pl. 550

Thratta, a slave name, P 1138

Thucydides, son of Melesias, leader of the aristocratic party in opposition to Pericles, ostracized 444 B.C., A 703, W 94

Thyestes, brother of Atreus, son of Pelops name of a play by Euripides, A 433

Timon, the misanthrope, B 1549, L 808

Timotheus, son of Conon, distinguished officer Pl. 180

Titans, B 469

Tithonus, husband of Aurora, made immortal, A 688

Tlepolemus, C 1266

Triballus, rude personage from Thrace, B 1570

Tricorythus, [illegible] of the Tetrapolis, L 1032

Triptolemus, a legendary pioneer of civilization, A 45

Trophonius, a hero, who had an oracle in Lebadea, in Boeotia, C 508

Tyndaridae, descendants of Tyndareus, king of Sparta, L 13

Xanthias, a slave name, A 243

Xenocles, a poor tragic poet, F 86, T 169, 441

Xenophantes, father of Hieronymus, C 349

Pheidias date of birth unknown died just before 432 B C the famous sculptor maker of the statues of Athene in the Parthenon and Zeus at Elis *P* 605 616
Pherecrates a comic poet *L* 158
Phersephatta—Persephone daughter of Demeter *F* 671
Philablus a district of Megara *A* 802
Philaenete *E* 42
Philemon a Phrygian *B* 763
Philepsius a composer of tales *Pl* 177
Philip son or disciple of Gorgias *W* 421 *B* 1701
Philocles a bitter tragic poet *W* 462 *T* 168
Philocrates a bird seller *B* 14
Philocrates by Aeschylus, quoted *F* 1383
Philoctetes a famous archer in the Trojan war bitten by a snake and left in Lemnos name of a play by Euripides exhibited 431 B C *A* 424
Philodoretus *E* 51
Philonides of Melite a bulky and clumsy blockhead but rich *Pl* 178 303
Philostratus a pander *K* 1069
Philoxenus father of Eryxis *F* 934
Phoenix accused by his father s wife of attempting her honour was blinded by his father name of a play by Euripides *A* 421
Phormio a naval officer who distinguished himself in the Peloponnesian War *K* 562 *P* 346 *L* 804
Phormisius a politician *F* 965 *E* 97
Phrixus by Euripides quoted *F* 1225
Phrygians a play by Aeschylus alluded to *F* 912
Phrynichus an Athenian comic poet rival of Aristophanes *W* 220 269 1490 *F* 13 a politician who helped to establish the Four Hundred *F* 689 an early tragedian predecessor of Aeschylus *B* 750 *F* 910 *T* 164
Phrynondas a rogue *T* 861
Phyle a hill fort in Attica which Thrasybulus made his headquarters *A* 1023 *Pl* 1146
Phyromachus a prude *E* 22
Pindar the poet *B* 939 quoted *K* 1329
Pittalus probably a doctor *A* 1032 1221 *W* 1432
Plataean franchise *F* 694
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Pnyx the place where the Athenian assembly held session *K* 749 *T* 658
Polias guardian of cities a title of Athene *B* 828
Polybus a personage in the story of Oedipus *F* 1192
Polyeides by Euripides quoted *F* 1477
Polymnestus a worthless man also the name of a musician *K* 1287
Pontus a district in northeastern Asia Minor *W* 700
Porphyrion a giant *B* 553
Poseidon *B* 1565 as synonym for an intrigue *L* 139
Potidaia on the peninsula of Pallene revolted from Athens in 432 B C retaken 429 *K* 438
Pramnian wine (from Icaria west of Samos) *K* 106
Prasiae a town in Laconia *P* 242
Prepis a dissolute man *A* 843
Priam *B* 512
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Procne slew her son Itys and was changed int nightingale *B* 665
Prodicus of Ceos a famous sophist *C* 361 *B* 69
Prometheus *B* 1494
Pronomus a flute player *E* 102
Propylaea the entrance to the Athenian Acropo *K* 1326
Proteus a mythical king of Egypt *T* 883
Proxenides a blusterer *W* 325
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Pylae—Thermopylae scene of Greek games *L* 1
Pylus a fort S W of Messenia taken by Demosthenes in 425 B C and held for Athens *K* 5 355 703 846 1058 1167 *C* 185 *P* 219 665 104 1163
Pyrilampes *W* 98
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Pythangelus *F* 87
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Sabazius the Phrygian Bacchus *W* 9 *B* 873 *L* 3
Sacas an alien poet *B* 31
Salabaccho a courtesan *K* 765 *T* 805
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Salamis scene of the naval victory over Xerxes 480 B C *K* 785
Samos an island off the west coast of Asia Minor 282 *L* 313
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Sardanapalus king of Assyria *B* 1021
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Smoius, a disreputable man, E. 846
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Solon, the great lawgiver of Athens, born about 6[illegible]8 B.C., died about 558, C. 1187
Sophocles, the tragic poet, born B.C. 495, died about 406, P. 531, 695, B. 100
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Styx, river in the lower regions, F. 470
Sunium, cape of Attica, C. 4
Sybaris, a luxurious city in southern Italy, H. 1435
Syra, a slave name, P. [illegible]46

Taenarum, a promontory of Laconia, where stood temple of Poseidon, A. [illegible] F. 187
Tartarus, the underworld, B. 693
Tartesian lampreys, from Tartessus in Spain, F. 4[illegible]
T[illegible]getus, a mountain range between Sparta and Messenia, L. [illegible]56
Teleas, flatterer, B. 168 [illegible] P. 1008
Telephus, play by Euripides, acted 438 B.C. Telephus was son of Heracles and A[illegible], exposed as an infant and brought up by a herdsman in power, he helped in the taking of T[illegible] A. 4[illegible]5, 43[illegible] [illegible]5, C. 9[illegible], F. 8[illegible], 400
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Theramenes, the Trimmer, a prominent statesman and general, became notorious for his changes of opinion, and in particular for his treachery to his fellow generals after the battle of Arginusae, 406 B.C., F. 541, 967
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Thratta, a slave name, P. 1138
Thucydides, son of Melesias, leader of the aristocratic party in opposition to Pericles, ostracized 444 B.C. A. 703, H. 947
Thyestes, brother of Atreus, son of Pelops, name of a play by Euripides, A. 433
Timon, the misanthrope, B. 1549, L. 808
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Triballus, a rude person from Thrace, B. 1572
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